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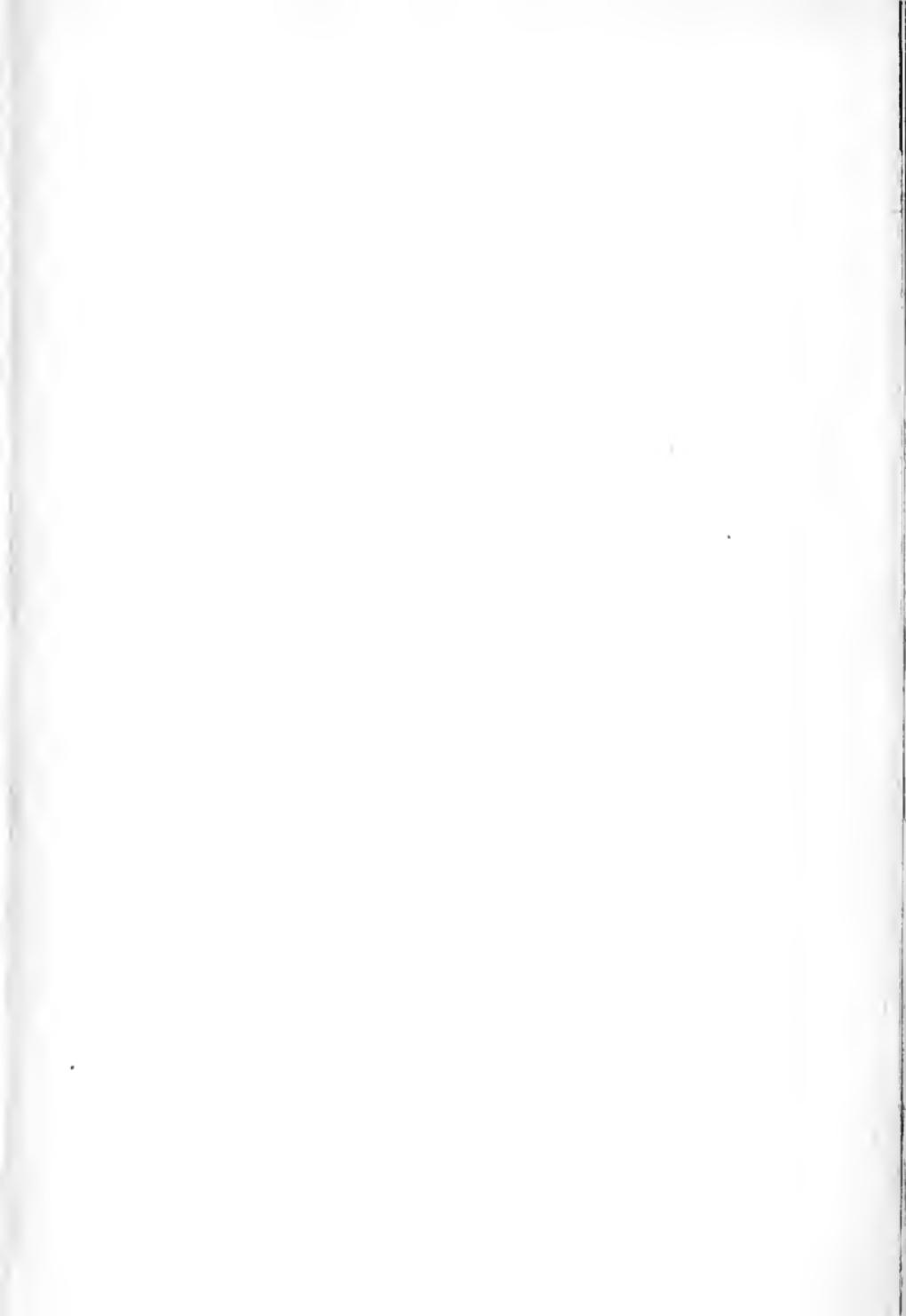
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NO. 3

ON SPINOZISTIC IMMORTALITY

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BY

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## PREFACE.

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In this monograph I have endeavored to set forth as clearly as possible Spinoza's doctrine of existences and essences and of the passage of the soul from the world of perishable things to that of things imperishable and eternal. To attain my end, it has seemed to me necessary to subject his conceptions to a careful, and, I fear, a somewhat tedious analysis. Such an analysis often appears rather hard and unsympathetic, and yet, if it be fair and impartial, it is simple justice. Surely the frankest and the most unsparing criticism should be accorded as a right to a serious and earnest man who has attempted to set forth, for the benefit of others, in an exact and scientific form what he believes to be the truth. An unintelligent and undiscriminating admiration is a poor tribute to offer to a man of genius.

In § 25 I speak at some length of the principles of philosophical hermeneutics, and these pages may be taken by the reader as a justification of my own method of procedure in dealing with Spinoza. I need only say here that I take him quite seriously, treating him as a philosopher and not as a poet, and that I make no statement which I do not support by carefully selected citations from or references to his own works. As his meaning is still a matter of a good deal of dispute, I beg the careful attention of the reader to these citations and

references, and I deprecate any criticism which does not give them due consideration. Spinoza is, I think, much misunderstood, and I believe this is owing to the fact that he is loosely read. His words are not usually subjected to the careful scrutiny which they deserve.

The aim which I have held in view has determined the form and content of my monograph. Of the sources of the Spinozistic philosophy I have said only so much as seemed necessary to exhibit the foundations upon which the structure was reared, and to show how natural it was for Spinoza to think and feel as he did. In portraying the doctrine itself, I have depended, of course, chiefly upon the "Ethics." I have made little reference to the Spinozistic literature; and I have omitted as needlessly pedantic the extensive notes which would have been necessary had I given, in the original Latin, duplicates of the citations which I have translated and incorporated into my text. The passages in question are not ambiguous, they have been translated many times, and either the original text or some other translation is easily within the reach of anyone who doubts the justice of my rendering of this or that passage.

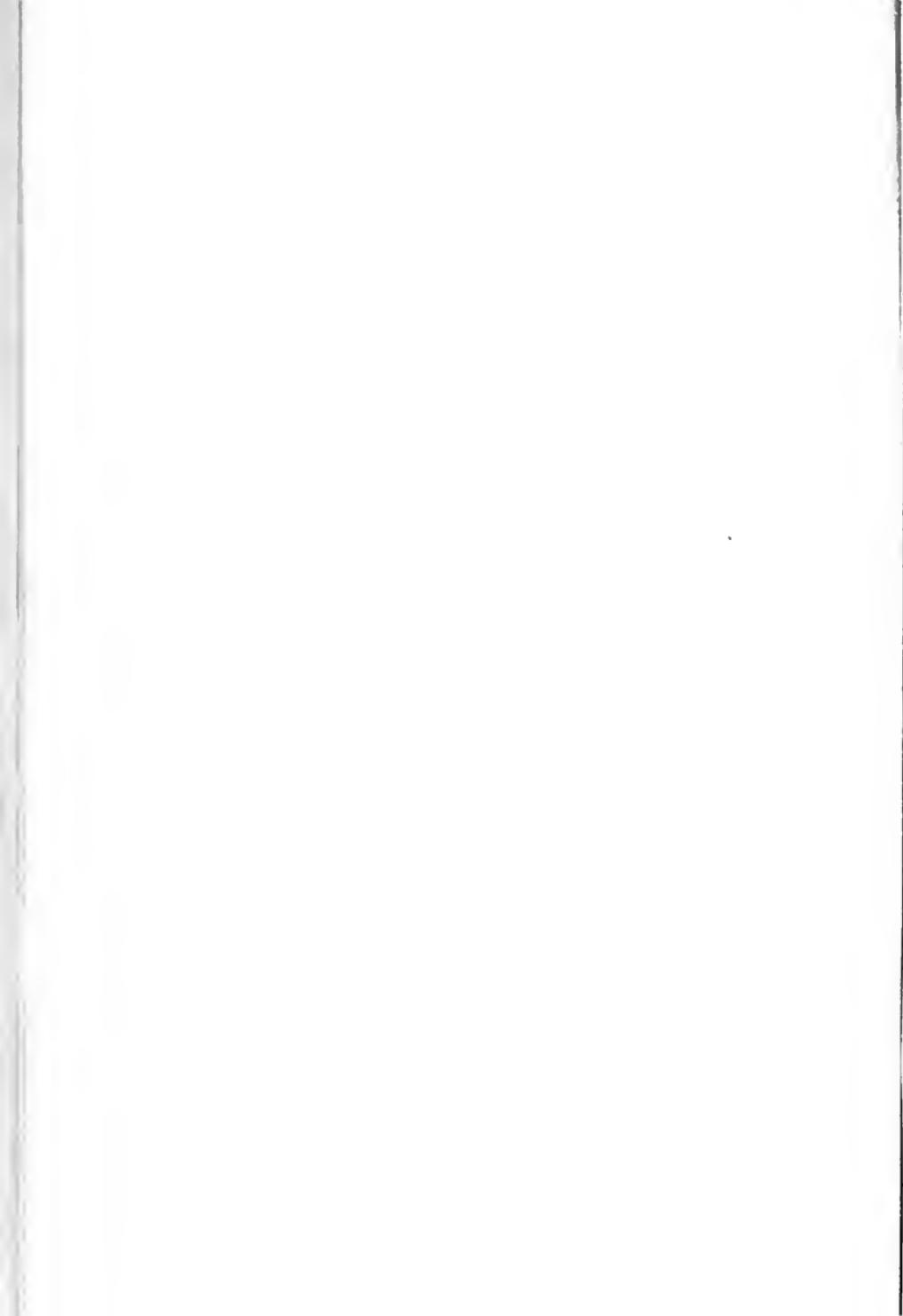
It is perhaps not out of place to remark that this paper ought to have rather more than a merely historical interest. Spinoza represents a certain way of thinking, which properly belongs, I believe, to the past, but of which there are to-day, particularly in England and America, numerous survivals. Spinozism has an historical justification; it is an articulated system resting upon a

basis which might well have seemed, in the seventeenth century, sound and satisfactory. Its very errors are deserving of a certain respect. But conceptions which do not appear out of place upon a background of seventeenth century thought, are a discordant element in the thought of the nineteenth. They have not the excuse for existence which they once had, and they hold their own, I believe, simply because they are not analyzed with sufficient care. If my criticisms will contribute even a little toward turning upon such conceptions a more searching light, I shall be abundantly satisfied.

GEORGE STUART FULLERTON.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

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## ON SPINOZISTIC IMMORTALITY.

### PART I.

#### THE WORLD OF EXISTENCES.

§ 1. *Epistemological.*—Descartes, who, with all his originality and independence of mind, was able very imperfectly to strip off the scholastic conceptions which had come to him as a heritage from the past, drew so sharp an antithesis between matter and mind that it became well-nigh inconceivable that they should act upon one another at all. The essence of mind was thought, the essence of body extension. The mind could be absolutely certain only of the existence of itself and of its thoughts; and it was forced to accept upon faith in the benevolence of the Deity the existence of an external material world quite cut off from direct inspection. The mind and everything known to it immediately were non-extended; matter was unthinking. Nothing less than an act of violence could unite so ill-assorted a couple, each member of which seemed doomed by its definition, as by an unpropitious horoscope, to languish in loneliness. This act of violence was accomplished when the spaceless soul was given a local habitation in the little gland in the midst of the brain, where it could, as from a convenient central position, control the body and be acted upon by it, through the agency of the animal spirits.

It is a matter of some surprise to the modern reader to see what a storm was aroused by the Cartesian conceptions at the time of their promulgation. Descartes' provisional doubt, so frankly expressed, and so openly critical of the accepted results of investigation in many distinct fields, might, it is true, be expected to cause irritation. His repudiation of authority, and seeming reliance upon his own individual strength, would, of course, be offensive to the Church. But, after all, his results,

and even his methods, can scarcely be called new; and after making a great show of independence, he falls back upon conceptions which he has inherited, and which present themselves to his mind as so natural and necessary that it does not occur to him to criticise them. St. Augustine had, long before, and almost in the very words afterward used by Descartes, traced the path of one who begins by a universal provisional doubt, seeks for some indubitable truth, sets his triumphant feet upon the rock of the necessary existence of the doubter, and proceeds to establish the existence of the Deity.<sup>1</sup> He, too, found it possible to raise the question of the existence of a material world, and succeeded, like Descartes, in giving to the question thus raised but a sorry solution.<sup>2</sup> And the Cartesian soul, the "*animula vagula*" inconsistently localized by Descartes "chiefly" in the pineal gland<sup>3</sup>—this is, after all, only the perplexing and abstract "*totum in toto*" soul of Plotinus,<sup>4</sup> which we find in Augustine,<sup>5</sup> and which he shows to be distinct from all that is material, not merely by the illogical doubt-argument used later by Descartes, but also by a more subtle and acute argument drawn from the relation of subject and attributes in what is corporeal and what is spiritual. The mind, he argues, can think of what is not itself as well as of itself; hence its thinking extends beyond the subject to which it belongs, while the qualities of material things *extensa* only as far as does the subject in which they inhere.<sup>6</sup>

Augustine makes the soul non-extended, and related to space as no material thing can be. It exists all in the whole and all in each part of the body at the same time. He had, perhaps, less ground for doubting of the existence of the external world than Descartes, for, although he makes the soul non-extended,

<sup>1</sup> *Soliloquia*; *De Trinitate*, X; *Ibid.*, VIII, 4, 5, 12; *De Civ. Dei*, XI, 26.

<sup>2</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, XI, 26; XIX, 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Les Passions de l'Ame*, 31, 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Ennead.*, IV, 2, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *De Trin.*, VI, 8.

<sup>6</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, IX, 5.

he admits that its knowledge extends beyond it, and he regards the senses as touching objects and thus obtaining impressions from them.<sup>1</sup> Not so Descartes; the soul to which his provisional doubt leads him is, to be sure, the abstract and inconsistent soul of Augustine's reasonings, which has descended through the ages without growing clearer or less abstract; but Descartes has discovered the body to be a cunningly devised machine, which needs contact with the ruling mind at but a single point. At that point he places the soul of the schoolmen.<sup>2</sup> There it receives messages from without, and from that spot it can execute its decisions, causing the pineal gland to incline in this direction or that, and driving the animal spirits to the proper parts of the brain.<sup>3</sup> How can such a being as the soul do such things as these? Neither Augustine nor Descartes can give us an answer.

It is not difficult to see that the universal doubt of Augustine was a mere methodological device, and not a sincere doubt. In the fervor of his first enthusiasm for the Christianity he had embraced, he wrote the "Soliloquia." He begins with an earnest prayer for light, and a determination to keep his mind in the proper receptive attitude. It is a foregone conclusion that he is to end with a belief in God and the soul's immortality. As he has well expressed it elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> he is to "doubt, without unbelief, of things to be believed." His attitude of mind can

<sup>1</sup> *De Trin.*, X, 16 and XII, 25.

<sup>2</sup> This localization must not be made too definite. For Descartes "l'âme est unie à toutes les parties du corps conjointement" still. But we find "une petite glande dans le cerveau en laquelle l'âme exerce ses fonctions plus particulièrement que dans les autres parties," and this gland is called "le principal siège de l'âme" (*Les Passions de l'Ame*, 30, 31, 32). These sections of the Treatise on the Passions, and some of Descartes' answers to the objections urged against the "Meditations" (e. g., *Troisièmes Objections*, Obj. Deuxième) show how little the Cartesian soul differed from the Scholastic, notwithstanding its "seat" in the gland.

<sup>3</sup> *Les Passions de l'Ame*, 36 and 42.

<sup>4</sup> *De Trin.*, IX, 1.

scarcely be called the truly philosophical one, and his evident bias is open and undisguised. Descartes, too, can scarcely, I think, be acquitted of the charge that he has brought forward rather a methodological than a sincere and thoroughgoing doubt. Such a doubt as the Cartesian is a convenient device for setting aside such a portion of the whole mass of current opinion, speculation and dogma as one does not care to accept. Before excluding all, one may have made up one's mind what one intends later to readmit. Certainly Descartes was very ready to admit much, and those things which he did admit were scholastic notions—a non-extended, incorporeal, abstract and indefinite soul, which knows things outside it; an extended, material world, numerically distinct from the ideas of it immediately before the mind. Descartes still held to the soul of the schoolmen, to the external world of the schoolmen, and to an epistemology all the elements of which he found ready to hand and did not independently discover. The worlds of matter and of mind had become so separated that it needed but a touch to make them fall apart altogether. Descartes merely emphasized an antithesis which already existed. A little more of the scientific spirit, a somewhat clearer notion of the body as a well-adjusted and complicated machine, performing its functions as an integral part of the material world and obeying natural laws, and the point of contact would be lost altogether. The doctrines which sprung up on the soil of Cartesianism—Occasionalism, Predetermined Harmony and the Spinozistic parallelism—testify to the readiness with which this step could be taken.

Spinoza, following in the footsteps of Descartes, distinguishes between ideas and the objects which they represent. He declares the two kinds of things to be wholly unlike each other. In the material world, the world of extension, a circle is an extended thing; it has a centre, and stretched around that a circumference. The idea of a circle, on the other hand,

has no centre and no circumference.<sup>1</sup> There can be no resemblance between the two. So sharply does Spinoza conceive the antithesis between matter and mind, that he is forced to deny all interaction between them.<sup>2</sup> Each world is sufficient to itself, each is infinite, and the individual members of each find their full explanation in a reference to other members of the same world. Bodies find their explanation in bodies, and ideas in ideas. In the physical world the order of causes extends back without a break and without limit; in the world of mind there is a similar unbroken chain.<sup>3</sup>

§ 2. *The World of Things.*—The most thoroughgoing materialist would be satisfied with Spinoza's position regarding the human body and its place in the material universe. No Democritean could be more dominated by the notion of mechanism. "A body in motion or rest," he teaches, "must have been determined to motion or rest by another body, which also was determined to motion or rest by another, this again by another, and so to infinity."<sup>4</sup> All changes taking place in the human body must be accounted for in the same way. The mind cannot "determine the body to motion or rest, or to any other state, if there be any other."<sup>5</sup> The prevalent opinion that the body is set in motion or brought to rest at the mind's good pleasure, or that its actions depend upon the mind's ability to think, is erroneous. Who knows enough about the human body to be able to say what it can and cannot do, judged as mere mechanism? The sagacious actions of the brutes and the remarkable performances of the somnambulist sufficiently prove that the body, by itself, can do much that the mind wonders at.<sup>6</sup>

The reign of physical law is, then, unbroken. The material

<sup>1</sup> De Int. Emendat., Ed. Van Vloten and Land, 1882, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, II, 6; III, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 7, schol.; II, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, II, 13, lemma 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ethics, III, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ethics, III, 2, schol.

universe of individual existing things is complete in itself, and carries within itself the sufficient reason for the appearance, development, functioning and disappearance of each individual thing which it contains. A human being is born, the body increases in size and develops in power, exhibits manifold activities, falls, with the progress of time, into decrepitude, and finally undergoes dissolution. For its appearance upon the stage, and for every change in the series that makes up its life-history, there are only physical causes. And this series of causes is, as I have said, endless; it cannot come to a limit in a first cause.<sup>1</sup>

So much for the world of corporeal things, the finite modes of the attribute extension. One cannot reach a Divine Mind by a regression in time, nor can one discover a mysterious contact with the finite mind in the little pineal gland, as Descartes had taught.<sup>2</sup> The modes of extension seem to form a wholly independent system, having no reference to anything else, a world as completely shut off from all else as would be the world of phenomena to a consistent Kantian, or the world of impressions and ideas to a thoroughgoing disciple of Hume. Spinoza furnishes no bridge by which one may pass from what is corporeal to existing things of another nature.

§ 3. *The World of Ideas.*—Nevertheless he believes in the existence of another system of existing things, which exactly reproduces the former. In some incomprehensible way, ideas, which have been declared absolutely unlike bodies, still truly represent them. The world of thought mirrors with exactitude the world of extension. Each corporeal thing has corresponding to it a mental thing, which may be called its idea; and the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of the things they represent.<sup>3</sup> Thus, notwithstanding the fact that ideas and things are wholly different,

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, 28; II, 13, lemma 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, pref.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 7.

the one world is the exact counterpart of the other. Each constitutes an infinite system of finite modes causally connected with each other. The individual things in the two systems lie, so to speak, in parallel planes, and can nowhere be brought together. As the mind cannot affect the body, so the body cannot affect the mind. Every idea must be caused by another idea, that by another, and so to infinity. Nor can one by a regression along this series arrive at God as a first cause of the series. As in the case of body, one finds only an endless chain of finite modes.<sup>1</sup> The world of ideas is, thus, as complete and independent as the world of things; there appears to be no way by which one can pass from it to any other world.

§ 4. *Critical Reflections.*—In setting forth Spinoza's doctrine of the two orders of existing things, and their parallelism, there are several matters upon which one is tempted to comment. In the first place, it is by no means clear how ideas of the kind advocated by Spinoza can represent things at all. How can a something wholly without extension, a something which, consequently, cannot have centre or circumference, represent a real circle which has these? What is here meant by the word "represent"? And how can the order of ideas be the same as the order of things, if ideas and things differ so radically? If we have three points in space so related to each other as to mark out an equilateral triangle, and three others so arranged as to indicate a straight line, what shall we call in each case the corresponding arrangement of representative ideas? Manifestly, in speaking thus of ideas, we are using words without a clear comprehension of their meaning. In the hands of Spinoza, ideas become as vague, shadowy, mysterious and fantastic as the scholastic soul with its inconsistent ubiquitous localization, and their representative function becomes incomprehensible. Spinoza spoke as a Cartesian, as a Scholastic; he spoke as it is not uncommon for writers to speak now; but he spoke without thought.

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 9.

Again, why did Spinoza, when he had this independent and self-sufficient world of ideas, feel impelled to assume that useless duplicate, the world of things? He appears never to have raised the question of its existence, never to have felt a serious doubt. And yet he had every reason to doubt. But just as Augustine<sup>1</sup> and Descartes<sup>2</sup> assume, without good reason, an external world, because, after all, it seems to them that they directly perceive it; just as Locke, after distinguishing carefully between ideas and external things, and making only the knowledge of ideas immediate, refers to direct experience as proof that a body is present;<sup>3</sup> so Spinoza, in spite of his separation of ideas and things, falls back upon direct perception, and believes that it furnishes him with both ideas and bodies. He regards it as axiomatic that "we perceive by sense that a certain body is affected in many ways," and that "we do not feel or perceive any individual things except bodies and modes of thinking."<sup>4</sup> For Spinoza,<sup>5</sup> as for Descartes,<sup>6</sup> there obtains the scholastic distinction between "formal" and "objective" existence, between the existence of a thing as an external reality and its existence in the mind through a representative image. It is the one essence to which is attributed both "formal" and "objective" existence, and this seems to give a certain unity to two things widely sundered. If I permit myself to speak of some external thing as existing "objectively" in my thought, it is but natural for me to forget sometimes that idea and thing are two and not one. The scholastic modes of expression are misleading, and there is more excuse for a confusion of thoughts and things on the part of Descartes and Spinoza, than on the part of Locke. But the impulse which led to the formation of such modes of expression

<sup>1</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, XIX, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Méditation Sixième*.

<sup>3</sup> *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. 4, Ch. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ethics*, II, axioms 4, 5, and prop. 13, cor.

<sup>5</sup> *Ethics*, I, 17, schol.; II, 7, cor.      <sup>6</sup> *Méditation Troisième*.

was identical with that which moved Locke to confound ideas with the things they are supposed to represent; and, indeed, identical with the impulse which moves every adherent of the doctrine of representative perception to embrace his inconsistent hypothesis. Upon this point I shall touch again later. Suffice it to say here, that it was natural that Spinoza should assume a world of things over against the world of ideas and represented by them.

The parallelism of ideas and things Spinoza justifies by the reflection that the world of thought and the world of extension are two aspects of one and the same substance. From this general doctrine he thinks it follows that each body and the idea of that body are one and the same thing viewed under two attributes. Hence, since we are dealing with the same thing, we may expect, whether we consider the world of matter or the world of mind, to find the same order of causes.<sup>1</sup> In passing, I may remark that it is by no means clear why an idea without centre or circumference, and wholly unlike a circle, might not as well represent a square or a triangle or even the Minotaur, as that particular geometrical figure we are accustomed to call a circle; or why the order of causes in the two worlds may not be different when it is possible for the natures of the things related to differ so widely. But upon this I shall not dwell. What I wish to point out is that this identification in words, of things defined to be wholly different from each other and completely independent, is not to be attributed merely to Spinoza's monistic tendency. As we have seen, Spinoza had inherited a belief in an external world and in a world of ideas representing it. He seemed to himself directly to perceive both ideas and things, and his ideas of things seemed really to correspond to the things of which they were ideas. Descartes, who feels the same impulse to assume an external world, and who sometimes, notwithstanding his own sweeping doubt, assumes

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 7, schol.

that things are immediately perceived,<sup>1</sup> is still sufficiently consistent to seek a proof that there exists a world corresponding to our ideas of one. He finds it in the goodness of God. A good God would not leave us in hopeless error; and since we cannot but believe that there is an external world, there must be one.<sup>2</sup> Such a recourse to a *deus ex machina*, an external divinity, is of course out of harmony with the spirit of Spinoza's philosophy. He simply identifies idea and thing in the one substance of which they are aspects, and thus explains their correspondence. His monism furnishes, if I may so express it, the *justification* of his parallelism; it is his explanation of how ideas and things come to correspond. But the parallelism itself is a direct outcome of Cartesianism and the confusion of idea and thing which has led so many philosophers to appeal to direct perception for evidence of the existence of the corporeal realities which they had already banished to a separate world.

§ 5. *Mind and Body*.—However, I must not be drawn into an extended discussion of the influences which gave rise to the Spinozistic doctrine. I am here chiefly concerned with the two worlds of ideas and of things. It should be borne in mind that the assertion that they are aspects of the one substance does not really bring them any nearer to each other than they were before. They correspond point for point; every change in the one has its corresponding change in the other. But no change in the one is the cause of change in the other; each order of causes extends away without a break to infinity; neither has any contact with any other sphere of being; each must find its explanation wholly within itself. That Spinoza chooses to call them one makes no difference whatever. They are absolutely independent.

The human body is a finite particular mode in the attribute extension. It is a corporeal thing in a world of corporeal things. The human mind is the corresponding mode in the

<sup>1</sup> Méditation Troisième. See my "Sameness and Identity," pp. 103-105.

<sup>2</sup> Méditation Sixième.

attribute thought. It is the idea of the body.<sup>1</sup> As we have seen, neither can in any way affect the other, but the two absolutely correspond, and whatever takes place in the body is reflected in the mind.<sup>2</sup> The mind, or the idea of the body, exactly represents the body, is complex as is the body,<sup>3</sup> and is composed of the ideas of the various parts of the body.<sup>4</sup> All the changes that take place in the body are perceived by the mind.<sup>5</sup>

So far we find nothing which contradicts the doctrine of parallelism set forth in the early part of Part II of the "Ethics." It would, however, seem to follow logically that the mind knows the body completely, with all its modifications, and knows nothing else. Yet such is not Spinoza's doctrine. The mind does not directly know the body,<sup>6</sup> which is its object.<sup>7</sup> It knows merely the modifications of the body.<sup>8</sup> And since the modifications of the body are the joint effect of the nature of the body and of that of the external bodies which act upon it, they "involve" the nature of every body concerned in the result.<sup>9</sup> Hence the mind perceives other external things as well as its own body, for their ideas are involved in the ideas of the modifications of its own body.<sup>10</sup> Its ideas, however, of other bodies than its own, represent rather the condition of its own body than the nature of the bodies they are said to represent.<sup>11</sup>

It is evident that all this cannot well be adjusted to the doctrine of the parallelism of modes in the attributes thought and extension. According to that doctrine, all individual things are animated, each body has its idea.<sup>12</sup> This idea, its duplicate, stands related to other ideas exactly as the thing is related to other things. There is no provision in the doctrine for even a

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 11, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Ethics, II, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, II, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Ethics, II, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Ethics, II, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, II, 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ethics, II, 17, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ethics, II, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ethics, II, 17, schol.

<sup>6</sup> Ethics, II, 19.

<sup>12</sup> Ethics, II, 13, schol.

partial correspondence between a thing and the idea, that is, the mental correlative, of something else. According to the doctrine of parallelism the idea of a circle holds the same place in the world-order of ideas that the circle does in the world-order of things. Hence the idea of the circle cannot be in a man's mind unless the circle is a constituent part of the man's body, or unless the body is affected in some "circular" way.

And yet Spinoza teaches that the mind may know many things besides its own body. He uses the word "idea" in two distinct senses, and explicitly recognizes that fact.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, he goes so far as to maintain that a human mind, by following in its investigations the right method, may have some success in reflecting the whole of nature.<sup>2</sup> He does not see that this is incompatible with his doctrine of the parallelism of modes in the two attributes; nor does he appear to recognize that in the case of ideas, in this second sense of the word, the representation of things by ideas becomes doubly incomprehensible. The modifications of the body due to the action of external things, although we call them images of things, do not reproduce the forms of their causes.<sup>3</sup> The modification of the body, then, which is caused by looking at a circle, is not itself a circle and is not like a circle. If this be so, how can its representative in the world of thought, its idea, in the first sense of that word, be identical with the real representative of the external circle, or even like it? It is manifest that Spinoza never clearly worked out the implications of his own assumptions. He speaks hesitatingly and indefinitely—the idea of Peter which is in Paul's mind "indicates rather the condition of Paul's body than the nature of Peter."<sup>4</sup>

Spinoza's reasons for making this break in his doctrine of parallelism are easy to see. He is impelled by the belief, already referred to, that we perceive directly both ideas and

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 17, schol.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 17, schol.

<sup>2</sup> De Int. Emendat., pp. 32-33.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

things.<sup>1</sup> He appeals to experience. But is it not evident from experience that we do not know all about our own body; that we are cognizant of changes in our body; that we know many external things; that we know them through their effect upon us; and that our knowledge of them is modified by our bodily constitution?<sup>2</sup> All these elements, taken up uncritically from common experience, Spinoza has embodied in his doctrine. As a matter of fact, experience (and here I include inherited and commonly current interpretations of experience) seems to justify the assumption of ideas of things, in the second sense of the word—of such ideas as the idea of Peter in Paul's mind—more unequivocally than it justifies the assumption of such ideas as are true correlatives of things and lie parallel with them. And yet the latter occupy a much more important place in Spinoza's philosophy than the former. Indeed, these ideas of the second kind can hardly be said to occupy a place at all. They have forced their way in, have obtained a momentary recognition, and have straightway been forgotten. There is no place for them to occupy; they cannot become a constituent part of the system into which they have thrust themselves.

As to the argument by which Spinoza justifies the presence in the mind of ideas representing bodies other than that of which the whole mind is the idea, that, I think, rests upon a confusion arising from the double sense of the word "involve," as he uses it. He speaks of the causes of any modification of the body as "involved"<sup>3</sup> in that modification, by which he means that they are in some sense given in it. It is not necessary for me to examine at length Spinoza's use of the word "involved," which, moreover, touches directly an aspect of his philosophy I have not yet discussed. It is enough for me to state in passing that his explanation applies with some plausibility

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, axioms 4 and 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, II, 17, schol.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 16, 17.

to what have been called "immanent" causes, but appears to have no applicability to transient. The individual things in nature are beside one another in space, and the conditions of things succeed one another in time. Cause and effect are here numerically distinct, and external to each other. In no proper sense of the word can the cause of any modification be said to be in that modification. And it is only when the cause of a modification is regarded as in some sense in it, that there seems any justification for making the idea of the modification a representative of the cause in question. Spinoza applies to transient causes a word which, for him, is laden with a meaning it has derived from immanent.

§ 6. *The Mind's Knowledge of Itself.*—Before leaving the subject of the nature of the human mind, I must say a word concerning the mind's knowledge of itself. Spinoza has called the body the "object" of the idea that constitutes the human mind.<sup>1</sup> He holds to the traditional dualism which regards knower and known as distinct and different things. When he passes to the consideration of the mind's knowledge of itself he repeats this dualism. Just as the body, an extended thing, has its correlate in the idea or knowledge of the body, so the mind has its correlate in the idea or knowledge of the mind.<sup>2</sup> The idea of the mind is related to the mind in the same way as the mind is related to the body.<sup>3</sup> This appears at first sight to give us a new parallelism, or, rather, an endless series of new parallelisms, for there may be the idea of an idea of an idea, etc. But the mind and the body, although they are but one thing viewed under two aspects, may still be distinguished from one another by the mere fact that they are two aspects of a thing; while the mind and the idea of the mind, both modes of the one attribute, cannot thus be held apart. Accordingly, Spinoza allows all the

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, II, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 21.

mental series to melt into one. The same thing viewed under but one aspect permits of no duality at all.<sup>1</sup> These ideas of ideas may safely be neglected; and I have brought them on the stage merely that I might give a reasonably complete outline of Spinoza's teachings regarding the nature of the mind.

§ 7. *Summary.*—Briefly summarized, Spinoza's doctrine of the two realms of real things, corporeal and mental, is as follows: The corporeal world consists of a limitless congeries of finite individual things, causally related to each other. All changes which take place in it are the result of previous changes in the same world. Nowhere is there any contact with any other sphere of being. Human bodies are highly complex bits of mechanism, and are influenced only by physical causes.

The world of mind is, so to speak, a copy of the corporeal world. It is composed of finite, particular ideas. Each thing in the corporeal world has its corresponding idea in the world of thought, and the complexity of the thing is reflected in its idea. The place of any idea in the world of thought corresponds precisely to the place of its object in the world of things. This correspondence must be absolute, and without exception, for an idea and its object are one and the same thing considered under two aspects. Like things, ideas are related only to other individuals in their own world. There is no contact between this sphere of being and any other.

The human mind is the idea of the human body, and exactly represents it. It is composed of as many ideas as the body is of parts, and the correspondence of idea to its object is carried out in every detail. The mind must not be regarded as a mysterious subject which *has* ideas: one cannot speak of it as *having* ideas, it *is* ideas. To Descartes, the mind was still a subject having attributes;<sup>2</sup> to Spinoza it is a group of ideas, as to Hume

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, II, 21, schol.

<sup>2</sup> *Méditation Deuxième*; *Réponses aux Troisièmes Objections*, II.

it is a "bundle of perceptions." And there can be no change in the ideas composing the mind except as it is brought about by preceding changes in the world of ideas. Spinoza's human being is the modern physical automaton with parallel psychical states; but ideal justice is done to the psychical states. They do not follow the body, like a shadow. They are equally independent, and play an equally important part as actors or sufferers in as complete and independent a world.

Such is the Spinozistic parallelism of ideas and corporeal things. To be sure, Spinoza is not always true to his own doctrine. It cannot be denied that in Part II of the "Ethics" he unconsciously gives the precedence to bodies, as in Part V he gives the precedence to minds. It must be admitted that he is untrue to it in his recognition of a certain correspondence between some ideas and bodies to which they are not the correlates, as also in his recognition of those ghostly ideas of ideas which scarcely show themselves before they melt away again into the ideas they represent. But these inconsistencies form no part of his general doctrine of the parallelism of ideas and things. That doctrine is stated clearly, and is free from ambiguities. Indeed, so clearly is it set forth, that there seems little excuse for Spinoza's introducing anywhere in his system doctrines inconsistent with it. The inconsistency ought to be apparent.

There exist, then, two independent but parallel worlds, consisting, in the one case, of finite individual bodies, and, in the other, of finite individual ideas. These two worlds exhaust the sum total of existence. There are no existing things that are not to be found, in some sense, in the one or the other of these worlds.<sup>1</sup> I shall have to justify this statement at length, and this brings me to an aspect of Spinoza's thought which I have not as yet discussed.

<sup>1</sup>I purposely omit all consideration of the infinity of attributes, to us unknown, of which Spinoza makes mention (*Ethics*, I, def. 6; I, 11; II, 7, schol.), but which play no part in his philosophy (II, axiom 5).

## PART II.

### THE WORLD OF ESSENCES.

§ 8. *The Universal.*—We have seen that Descartes, after clearing the field by a sweeping scepticism, took back again as satisfactory much that he had at first excluded as doubtful. He thus took back an extended external world, and a non-extended mind, which in some sense mirrors within itself this extended world. He even accepted, in a certain hesitating way, a view of the union of these two not widely different from that which had obtained for centuries before his day. But Descartes was a man of scientific mind, not mystical in his tendencies ; and there was one element in the thought of many of his predecessors with which he was not in sympathy, and which he did not admit into his philosophy. This was the realistic tendency to hypostatize universals, which we find in Plato and in all those who have drawn their inspiration, directly or indirectly, from that master mind.

During the Middle Ages, Christian, Jew and Arab alike found the problem of the universal and its relation to individual things an absorbing one. The number of those who gave to this problem a Platonic answer, or, at least, an answer colored by the Platonic realism, was large. I shall not seek here to discover to just what sources Spinoza was most indebted for the realistic aspect of his philosophy. Suffice it to say that he did not borrow this from Descartes, and that he might have gotten it from either Jewish or Christian writers. The mediæval Jewish philosophy was an Aristotelianism modified by Platonic conceptions. The history of scholasticism shows how important was the part played by realism in Christian thought. The temper of Spinoza's mind would naturally incline him toward a philosophy which seems well adapted to nourish the peculiar religious

emotion which is craved by the mystic; and that aspect of his philosophy of which we cannot find the explanation in his Cartesian studies can be abundantly explained by other sources of instruction open to him at the time in which he lived.

Setting aside, then, the question of the exact source of the influences which determined the nature of Spinoza's doctrine, I shall give, as briefly as I may, an account of the shadowy world of essences, a comprehension of which is so important to the interpretation of the "Ethics." But I shall have to preface my remarks with a discussion of the nature of "essences" in general, and of the significance of the Platonic realism. What I have to say upon this subject, I have said as clearly, I think, as I can say it, elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> I shall take the liberty of quoting some paragraphs in this paper.

"When two or more things resemble each other in any way, or, as we say, have anything in common, we may make a distinction between the quality or qualities they have in common and those in which they differ from each other, and we may regard the objects as forming a class, giving them a class name. This class name indicates just what they have in common, and abstracts from the other qualities possessed by the objects. When, for example, I compare several men, I may recognize that they are all alike in certain respects, and may, for convenience, regard them as a class, giving them the general name 'man.' This general name 'man' stands, or should stand, only for those qualities possessed by every member of the class. In the same way, I may form other class notions of higher and higher degrees of generality, after the fashion of the handbooks on logic, and may obtain a series of general terms related to each other as lower and higher in the same series, such as man, animal, living being, body, being. Whether the concept be of a low or of a high degree of generality, the procedure is just the same. That which a number of individuals have in

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, second edition. New York, 1894. Pp. 225-233.

common is distinguished from that in which they differ, and is, for the time being, made the object of special attention.

"It was but natural that, at an early period of the history of thought, reflection should occupy itself with this general notion, marked by the class name, and strive to fathom its significance. We apply the name 'man' to a great many different individuals, and recognize that, in so far as each is a man, they are in some sense the same. When a man dies and disappears, 'man' does not disappear, for here is 'man' in another individual. What more natural than to assume that 'man' (the universal) must have a reality independent of all individual men, eternal, immutable and apart, unaffected by all the changes in individual things? What more natural than to assume that the 'man' in each individual man must be strictly identical with that in each other, and that, although present in all, it must be in some sense an individual real thing. This is just what Plato does. Distinguishing between the universal and the individual, between 'man' and men, he thought it necessary, according to Aristotle, who does not, I think, do him injustice, to assume an object for the universal outside of and apart from all the individuals forming a class. This, the object of the general term, is the Platonic Idea. It is a real thing, the real thing, in which the individuals participate, or of which they are copies; but it is not itself to be found in any or all of them except, so to speak, in a figurative or metaphorical way. Aristotle, seeing no reason to assume a new individual, for so he regarded the Platonic Idea, placed the universal *in* the objects composing the class. Certain of the schoolmen, emphasizing the difference between real things and mental representations, maintained that only individuals have real existence, and asserted either <sup>3</sup> that universals exist merely as peculiar combinations of mental elements which serve to think the objects forming a class, or <sup>4</sup> that the only thing that can properly be called universal is the word, which may be applied indifferently to many individuals of the one kind. In these views

we have the *universalia ante rem*, the *universalia in re*, and the *universalia post rem*; or Extreme Realism, Moderate Realism,<sup>1</sup> and Nominalism in its two forms.

“Now the great snare and stumbling-block of all those who busy themselves with universals is the tendency to make abstractions concrete things—to add what the very nature of the case demands should be absent. When we give a name to a class of objects as a class, or, rather, when we give a name to what a number of objects have in common, we should remember that we are abstracting from everything in which the objects differ. We are trying to indicate that each possesses certain elements which, taken by themselves, render impossible any distinction between different objects. We distinguish two objects as two through some difference, even if it be only local or temporal. Redness combined with *a* and redness combined with *b* are recognized as two occurrences of redness, but this only on account of *a* and *b*. Redness perceived to-day and redness perceived yesterday are two occurrences of redness, marked as such by the ‘to-day’ and the ‘yesterday.’ Redness considered simply contains nothing which will allow of such distinctions. This does not imply at all that redness considered simply is *an occurrence of redness*—that since we have not two or more occurrences of the quality, we have a single occurrence of it, an individual. We have not, if we have really abstracted from all save the redness, any ‘occurrence’ or ‘occurrences’ at all, for these imply just the elements of difference which we are endeavoring to eliminate. An ‘occurrence’ of redness means redness with a difference which will mark it out from other redness, from another ‘occurrence.’ When, therefore, one gives to twenty individuals a common name to indicate that they resemble each other, one should keep clearly in mind just what this means. It means that along with various differing elements each

<sup>1</sup> When in this paper I use the word “realism” alone, I do not mean to include this doctrine.

contains the element  $x$ . And when one proposes to separate the  $x$  from the other elements, and consider it separately, he should be most careful to see that he is really taking it separately, and not allowing shreds of foreign matter to hang to it and give rise to inconsistencies and perplexities. He should make sure that he is keeping his abstraction abstract, and not turning it into a concrete thing in any sense whatever. For instance, he should not overlook the fact that there is a fallacy in the very question, whether the  $x$  in any one individual is strictly identical with the  $x$  in any other. If these two  $x$ 's are distinguishable as in two individuals, one is not considering  $x$  merely, but  $x$  with other elements. The separation of the  $x$  element from the other elements in the objects is here not complete, or one would be considering not 'an  $x$ ' or ' $x$ 's,' but  $x$ . The abstract  $x$  cannot, strictly speaking, be *in* any of the individuals while remaining an abstraction. When it is in an individual it is 'an  $x$ '—or  $x$  with a difference. So when Spinoza makes his 'fixed and eternal things' individuals, and yet declares them to be present everywhere, he is in the same sentence making them abstract and concrete. A universal may be present in many places only in the sense that the  $x$ —common, as we say, to a number of individuals—is found now combined with these elements and now with those. As combined with them it becomes this  $x$  or that, and is no longer universal. Every individual  $x$ , as an individual, is, of course, a different thing from every other, and is not strictly identical with it.

"Now when Plato looked for the object of the general name, what did he do? He created a new object distinct from and apart from all the others. He is very vague in his statements, and he was probably quite as vague in his thought; but I cannot see how anyone familiar with the 'Phaedrus,' the 'Republic,' the 'Timaeus,' the 'Symposium,' and the 'Parmenides,' and familiar with Plato's concrete way of thinking in images, can avoid coming to the conclusion that the Idea was to him

predominantly an object, an individual—a vague and inconsistent object, if you please, but still an object. But *an x* is in no sense a universal. It is the same with other *x*'s only in being like them. The *x* that they have in common must be *x* considered simply, not *x* considered as here or there, in this place or in that. All such differences must be completely eliminated if one is to get, not an individual, but a universal. If the Idea may be considered as *apart* from objects, it is an object in so far not essentially differing from the others, and it matters little whether it be put in heaven or on the earth or in the waters that are under the earth. Wherever and whatever it may be, it is an individual and must act like an individual, that is, it can only be in the one place at the one time. Plato did not recognize this fact. Although he makes his Idea an object, he does not put it on the same plane with other objects. They suffer change, while it is immutable; they are perceptible by the senses, and it is not; they are fettered by space and time conditions, while it is in some sense present in many individuals and is in its nature eternal. The trouble has arisen out of his difficulty in keeping an abstraction abstract; he has turned it into a concrete, and finding in the world of sense no place for this concrete, this new individual, he has given it a world of its own, where it lives an amphibious life peculiar to itself, and becomes a perennial source of difficulties to succeeding generations of philosophers.

“Aristotle, seeing very clearly some of the objections to this mode of procedure, placed the idea *in* the objects forming the class. It may be objected that putting *x* *in* a place individualizes it as much as putting it *out of* a place. This is quite true if the *in* be taken locally—taken as it is when we speak of a man as being in one room rather than in another. The *x* in one object is not identically the *x* in another object. We do not get the universal, *x* in the abstract, until we lose the distinctions ‘in the one object’ and ‘in the other object.’ If, however, by the statement that the universal is in the objects, one means

merely that the universal is that element *x*, which, combined with certain elements, forms a total which is known as this object, and combined with certain others forms a total which is known as that, but taken by itself contains no distinction of this and that; if this be all that is meant by the *in*, there is no objection to the use of the statement, and it is strictly true. The *x* element is a part of each of the objects, but, until some addition is made to it, it is not 'the *x* in this object' or 'the *x* in that object'; it is what they have in common. The 'in common' means just this.

"The nominalistic doctrine has, as has been said, two forms. The extreme nominalistic position, that the only true universal is the name, is highly unreasonable. If the objects to be classed together really have something in common, then that which they have in common is a universal element. If, on the other hand, they have nothing in common, why put them into one class and give them a common name? As for the more moderate nominalism, or the doctrine of the conceptualists—that appears to do justice to ideas, but hardly to things. In so far as it holds that the mind can form a concept, which shall consist of the element or elements several objects have in common, we have no quarrel with it. Here we find a true universal, obtained by discarding differences which distinguish objects from one another. We obtain by this that mental core common to several similar mental objects, in other words, to several ideas. If, however, we distinguish between mental objects and 'real' things corresponding to them, we have evidently two distinct fields to consider. Do our ideas truly correspond to external objects? Then, if the ideas have something in common, are enough alike to furnish a concept, must not their corresponding objects also be alike? must they not, too, have something in common? a universal element? It does not in the least explain the universal element in 'real' things to point out that in the mind there exists a concept or general notion. The concept can be no true

\*representative of what is outside unless it truly correspond to a universal element outside. This sounds a little like extreme realism, but it differs from it as widely as the poles. It is only necessary to bear in mind that, just as the concept, to remain a universal, must be kept abstract, so this hypothetical external universal must be kept abstract, and not turned into a thing.

“On the whole, the most reasonable doctrine is the Aristotelian, the moderate realism. It is necessary, however, to understand it carefully, and to avoid all tendency to individualize abstractions. That this is by no means easy to do, the history of philosophy clearly shows ; and it shows, too, into what serious perplexities one falls when one neglects to observe this precaution. The Anselmic view of genera and species as universal substances<sup>1</sup> is an instance of this error. The doctrine attributed to William of Champeaux by Abelard, that universals are essentially and wholly present in each of their individuals, in which latter there is no diversity of essence, but only variety through accidents,<sup>2</sup> is tenable or not, according to the sense in which the words are taken. The word ‘wholly’ is an awkward one, and seems to indicate that William regarded the universal as a thing, a concrete, which may be in this place or that. Whatever he may have intended to say, there can be no mistake as to the meaning of the following sentence from Robert Pulleyn : ‘The species is the whole substance of individuals, and the whole species is the same in each individual : therefore the species is one substance, but its individuals many persons, and these many persons are that one substance.’<sup>3</sup> The man who could pen such a sentence must have seen his universals through the thickest of fogs, and must have been capable of all sorts of logical enormities. We find nearly everywhere in the Middle Ages this tendency to turn abstractions into things, and we see the same

<sup>1</sup> Hauréau, “Philosophie Scholastique,” Paris, 1872, I, p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> “Historia Calamitatum,” quoted by Hauréau, I, p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Hauréau, I, p. 328.

tendency later. The procedure has a peculiar charm for the mystic, and one which he finds it hard to resist. It would not be difficult to cite contemporary instances of the blunder."

The difficulty, then, with which the realist has to contend, is that he is dealing in his reasonings with abstractions, and yet fails to see all that is implied in their being abstractions. His essences or universals tend not to remain essences, but to become, in some sense, existences. And they are necessarily inconsistent and unreal existences, whose incoherent and irresponsible behavior as they make their entrances and exits into the real world and out of it, produce a feeling of bewilderment in lovers of clear and consistent thinking.

§ 9. *Spinoza's Realism.*—Like Plato, Spinoza, by turning abstractions into concrete things, or rather, by making them semi-concrete, secures for himself a vague, shadowy and inconsistent world of essences, which enjoy a being widely different from that of the bodies and ideas that constitute the concrete and real dual world of existences. I say "enjoy a being," and thus seem to contradict what I have said before, namely, that the real world of ideas and things embraces the sum total of existence. My excuse must be that it seems almost necessary to speak in a contradictory way of things in their nature contradictory. I trust that my meaning will be made plain in what follows. But the fact remains that Spinoza does attribute to his world of essences a sort of being, and distinguish between it and the world of existences. If this realistic side of his philosophy be not recognized, and his essences be not recognized, too, as universals, I believe that many of the reasonings in the "Ethics" become simply meaningless. Spinoza was at heart a thorough realist; he thought like a realist, he felt like a realist, he wrote like a realist. He has said some things which do not sound realistic, it is true; but I cannot understand how anyone who has read with care and discrimination the treatise "On the Improvement of the Understanding" and the "Ethics" could be misled

by a few nominalistic utterances into misunderstanding the whole fabric of Spinoza's thought. His error is not new or strange. Such reasonings are centuries old, and of them we have many examples. Spinoza belongs to a class, and presents the striking characteristics of the class to which he belongs. He, of course, did not clearly recognize that his essences are abstractions. Had he done this, he would not have turned them into things. But then we should not have had the Spinozistic philosophy. We should have had simply the double world of ideas and bodies which I have discussed at length. On the other hand, had he really and consistently tried to treat as concrete things his series of essences, we should not have had the Spinozistic philosophy either. The notion of immanence would have disappeared, and the series of essences would have become nothing else than a third world of things, not different, in their manner of existence, from bodies and ideas.

We must not, therefore, be surprised at finding inconsistency in Spinoza. The universals of the realist, to be satisfactorily used as he wishes to use them, must be both abstract and concrete, not consistently either the one or the other. Hence we may expect to find in a realistic writer some expressions which seem to prove that his essences are concrete things, and some which indicate that he is dealing with abstractions. That such is the case with Spinoza, I shall endeavor to show. The danger of overlooking the fact that his essences are really abstractions at bottom is heightened by the nominalistic reasoning which he applies to some universals, for he does not treat all universals in the same way, nor does he make all essences.

§ 10. *Nominalistic Utterances.*—The way in which the mind arrives at some general notions Spinoza has very clearly set forth: "Nevertheless, that I may omit nothing that it is necessary to know, I will briefly mention the causes in which the terms known as *transcendental* have had their origin, as, for example, Being, Thing, Something. These terms arise from the

fact that the human body, since it is limited, is only capable of forming in itself distinctly a certain number of images at one time (*I have explained what an image is in the scholium to prop. 17*). If this number be exceeded, the images begin to run together; and if the number of images that the body is able to form in itself distinctly at one time be greatly exceeded, they are all entirely confused with each other. Since this is so, it is evident from the corollary to prop. 17, and from prop. 18, that the human mind can imagine distinctly at one time as many bodies as there are images that can be formed at one time in the body corresponding to it. But when the images in the body are wholly confused with each other, the mind, too, will imagine all the bodies confusedly, and without distinguishing them at all. It will grasp them under one attribute, as it were, namely, under the attribute of Being, of Thing, etc. This can also be deduced from the fact that images are not always equally lively; and from other causes analogous to these, which it is not necessary to unfold here, for it is sufficient to the object I have in view to consider a single one. They all amount to this, that these terms stand for ideas in the highest degree confused. Again, from like causes have sprung the notions called *universals*, as Man, Horse, Dog, etc. There are formed in the human body at the one time so many images—for instance, of man—that they overcome the faculty of imagination; not, indeed, wholly, but to such a degree that the mind is unable to imagine the little differences in the individuals (as the color, the size, etc., of each) and their exact number. It distinctly imagines only that in which all, in so far as they affect the body, agree. By this element, especially, the body was affected in the case of each individual; it is this that the mind expresses by the word *man*; and this that it predicates of an infinity of individuals. As I have said, it cannot imagine the exact number of individuals. But bear in mind that these notions are not formed by everyone in the same way, but differently by each according to the nature of the object by

which the body has been the more often affected, and which the mind most easily imagines or remembers. For example, those who have more often regarded with admiration the stature of men will understand by the word *man* an animal erect in stature. Those, on the other hand, who have been accustomed to notice something else, will form another common image, as that man is a laughing animal, a featherless biped, a rational animal, and so on. Each one will form universal images of things according to the character of his body. Hence it is not strange that among philosophers, who have endeavored to explain nature through the mere images of things, there have arisen so many controversies.<sup>1</sup>

This certainly does not sound realistic. A modern conceptualist would leave out of consideration "the images formed in the body," but otherwise he would find here little to criticise. Again: "In the same way it is proved that there is in the mind no absolute power of knowing, desiring, loving, etc. Whence it follows, these and similar faculties are either absolutely fictitious, or only metaphysical entities—universals—that we are accustomed to form from individuals. Thus, understanding and will are related to this or that idea and to this or that volition, as lapisity is related to this or that stone, or man to Peter or Paul. Why men think themselves free I have explained in the Appendix to Part I. Before I go further, it should be noted that I mean by will, not desire, but the faculty of affirming and denying; I mean, I say, the faculty by which the mind affirms or denies what is true or false, and not the desire through which the mind seeks or avoids things. But having proved these faculties to be universal notions, which are not distinguished from the individuals of which we form them, it remains to inquire whether the volitions themselves are anything but just the ideas of things. It remains, I say, to inquire whether there is in the mind any other affirmation or negation than that involved in an idea, in that it is an idea."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 40, schol. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, II, 48, schol.

§ 11. *Evidence of Spinoza's Realism.*—This is, very definitely and unequivocally, nominalistic doctrine. Consistently carried out it would teach that only individuals exist, and that all universals are “*entia rationis*” and nothing more—that extension is related to this or that extended thing, and thought to this or that idea, “as lapidity is related to this or that stone.” The world of essences, regarded as a sphere of being, would vanish into nothingness, if this were done.

In the “*Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*,” as well as in the “*Ethics*,” Spinoza warns the reader against a misuse of abstractions. It is, however, absurd to cite this treatise in proof that he was really a nominalist. It yields unmistakable evidence that, while writing it, he was so completely a realist as to be at times wholly unconscious that his essences were universals at all. In speaking of the series of essences, or “fixed and eternal things,” as he calls them, and of the deduction of these from one another, he insists that we must deal with “real entities;” that we must proceed “from one real entity to another real entity, not passing to abstractions and universals, either for the purpose of deducing some real thing from them, or for the purpose of deducing them from some real thing.”<sup>1</sup> Either of these modes of procedure interrupts, he asserts, the true progress of the understanding. In other words, his “fixed and eternal things” are to Spinoza, as they should be to a realist, rather concrete than abstract; and in such passages as the one quoted he has quite lost sight of the fact that they are really universals. He goes so far as to state that we seek, in the first principle of nature, “a being single and infinite, in other words, the sum total of being, beyond which there is no being.”<sup>2</sup> This is the first of the “fixed and eternal things,” from which all the other members of the series are to be deduced. And in speaking of the relation of the finite mind to God—this single and infinite being—he declares that we are parts of a thinking being, whose thoughts, some in their entirety and some as fragments, constitute our mind.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Int. Emendat.*, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

The language of the "Ethics" is no less striking: "These are the things I set out to prove with regard to the mind, in so far as it is considered without relation to the existence of the body. From these, and at the same time from I, 21, and other propositions, it appears that our mind, in so far as it knows, is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another eternal mode of thinking, this again by another, and so to infinity; so that they all together constitute the eternal and infinite intellect of God."<sup>1</sup> Such language would undoubtedly make the first of the series of essences an individual thing and not an abstraction. The realism in it is so marked that it almost ceases to be realism, for, as I have said, the essences of the realist should not be either too concrete or too abstract, if they are to serve his purpose. This being, which is the sum of all being, this thinking thing, which is an aggregate of finite ideas, is quite out of place at the head of a series of essences. The "first principle of nature" becomes but another name for the world of individual bodies and individual ideas with which the world of essences should stand in contrast.

Fortunately for Spinozism, Spinoza was not always so ultra-realistic. Even in the "De Intellectus Emendatione" there is evidence that his "fixed and eternal things" are fundamentally abstractions. The distinction he draws between these and the multiplicity of particular mutable things which are to be conceived through them, is unmistakable.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he expressly admits that these eternal things, which he has declared concrete, are inconsistently concrete: "Whence these fixed and eternal things, although they are individuals, on account of their presence everywhere and their far-reaching power will be to us as universals, or genera of definitions of individual mutable things, and as the proximate causes of all things."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 40, schol.

<sup>2</sup> De Int. Emendat., pp. 32-34.

<sup>3</sup> De Int. Emendat., p. 33.

But a careful reading of the "Ethics," sets it, in my opinion, beyond all question that the "fixed and eternal things" are universals, abstractions, although inconsistently treated as concrete. Of this there is so much evidence that it is a little difficult to know what passages to choose in illustration of the fact. To prove that there cannot be in the universe two or more substances of the same nature, or with the same attribute, Spinoza argues as follows: "Were there several distinct substances, they would have to be distinguished from one another either by a difference in attributes or by a difference in modifications. If merely by a difference in attributes, it will be admitted there cannot be more than one with the same attribute. If, on the other hand, one is to be distinguished from another by a difference in modifications, then, since a substance is by nature prior to its modifications, when we lay aside its modifications, and consider it in itself, that is, consider it as it is, we cannot conceive it as distinguished from another substance. In other words, there cannot be several substances, but only one."<sup>1</sup> Evidently the substance which is obtained by abstracting from differences is the genus which remains when we leave out of view the marks which serve to distinguish from one another the species. One gets by this mode of procedure, not a "particular affirmative essence," the "whole of being, beyond which there is no being," an aggregate, of which individual modes, like human minds, are parts. One gets a true universal. Spinoza very properly indicates elsewhere that the substance reached by this process cannot properly be called "one."<sup>2</sup>

The above argument to prove that there cannot be two substances of the same nature furnishes Spinoza with a basis for his proof that absolutely infinite substance is indivisible. He reasons as follows: "Were it divisible, the parts into which it would be divided will either retain the nature of absolutely infinite

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Epistola L, ed. Van Vloten & Land, 1883.

substance, or will not. If the former, there will be several substances of the same nature, which is absurd. If the latter, then it will be possible for absolutely infinite substance to cease to be, which is also absurd."<sup>1</sup> It is indeed absurd that there should be several substances of the same nature, if by substance is meant what remains after absolutely all differences have been abstracted from. The very phrase "several substances" is, in this case, big with contradiction. But if by substance is meant something else, the argument does not hold at all.

Leaving substance in general and turning to its manifestation in the attribute extension, Spinoza again argues in such a way as to show clearly that his "eternal things" are universals. He writes: "If, nevertheless, one here asks, why we are so prone by nature to divide quantity (extension); I answer, it is because we conceive quantity in two ways; to wit: abstractly, that is, superficially, as when we imagine it; and, second, as substance, in which case we conceive it by means of the understanding alone. If, therefore, we consider quantity as it is in the imagination, a thing we do often and quite easily, we shall find it finite, divisible, and composed of parts. If, on the other hand, we consider it as it is in the understanding, and conceive it as substance—a very difficult task—then, as I have already sufficiently proved, we shall find it infinite, single, and indivisible. This will be plain enough to everyone who knows how to distinguish between the imagination and the understanding, especially if he will also consider that matter is everywhere the same, and that there is in it no distinction of parts except as we conceive it as affected in divers ways, whence its parts are distinguished only modally, not really. For example, we conceive water, in so far as it is water, to be divided, and its parts to be separated from one another; but not in so far as it is corporal substance, for, in so far as it is that, it is neither separated nor divided. Again, water, in so far as it is water, is generated and destroyed; but in so far as it is substance, it is neither generated nor destroyed."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, 15, schol.

Manifestly, what Spinoza means here by conceiving "quantity" or extension in the imagination, is the picturing of concrete extended things, which are different and distinct from one another; and what he means by conceiving it by means of the understanding is the abstracting from all individual differences and holding before the attention only that which extended things have in common. Of course, if we abstract from the "divers ways" in which matter is affected, we can make no distinction between this extended thing and that—we have in mind only extension in the abstract, a universal. By setting aside the modifications of his attribute, Spinoza has made a division of it into parts impossible. But then he has made it equally impossible to regard substance as the "sum of being, beyond which there is no being." He is unmistakably dealing with a true universal, which is "in" all of the things which may be subsumed under it, and of which they cannot possibly be the component parts.

I lay stress upon the nature of Spinoza's "fixed and eternal things," because I regard a recognition of them as universals as essential to a comprehension of the structure of his system. Nothing else can explain his notion of immanence; nothing else can explain the relation of the higher essences to the lower, and of the lower to individual things. I hope that I am not dwelling upon it at too great length; but since it seems to be possible for some, who have devoted a good deal of attention to the Spinozistic philosophy, quite to overlook the fact that Spinoza is a realist, I may be pardoned for not passing lightly over this part of my subject. It is not surprising that those who thus misunderstand Spinoza should find the reasonings contained in the "Ethics" obscure.

§ 12. *The Hierarchy of Essences.*—But I must turn to the hierarchy of essences, as we find it indicated, I will not say set forth, in Spinoza's works. The Platonic world of Ideas was an ordered world, the members of which stood to each other in relations of precedence and subordination. Universals are of a

higher or lower degree of generality, and when they were turned into semi-concrete "Ideas," this peculiarity of their arrangement was naturally reproduced in the world of Ideas. At the head of the hierarchy Plato put the Idea of the Good, which, as a semi-concrete entity, he made the cause and source of all things.<sup>1</sup> We find the arrangement of the series of essences in Spinoza very similar. Only, as Spinoza has divided the universe of existing things into the two independent spheres of thought and extension, he has a double series of essences to hold in view. The essences in the two series are, however, parallel, and correspond point for point, so that it is not always necessary, in speaking of the two series, to mark the fact that they are two. Yet they are as distinct and separate from one another as are individual ideas and bodies—perhaps I would better add, except at their upper limit, where they appear to coalesce in a certain vague and ambiguous manner in a common member, God or substance. I shall discuss this a little later, but for the present I shall assume that the two series of essences find a point of union in God.

God, or substance, is defined as consisting of "an infinity of attributes, each one of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence."<sup>2</sup> Under these attributes stand certain infinite modes—for example, under the attributes thought and extension, the only ones with which we need to concern ourselves, stand, respectively, "absolutely infinite understanding" and "motion and rest;"<sup>3</sup> then follow other eternal modes;<sup>4</sup> then essences of various inferior orders;<sup>5</sup> and, finally, not belonging to the series, but in some vague way limiting them,<sup>6</sup> we find finite particular modes, or the individual things in nature, which are not essences at all, but existences in the two worlds which I discussed at length in the first part of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> Rep. VI, 508 and VII, 517.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, def. 6.

<sup>5</sup> De Int. Emendat., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Epistola, LXIV.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., and Ethics, I, 8, schol. 2.

§ 13. *The Hierarchy of Essences and Individual Things.*—Plato's system of Ideas was never developed clearly and fully; and Spinoza's account of the world of "fixed and eternal things" is meagre in the extreme. And yet the whole aim of the Spinozistic philosophy was to mark out the path which leads from bondage to freedom; the path by following which the mind can rise from such a knowledge of things as involves their relations to other finite things, a knowledge of them as mere existences in the world of existences, to a knowledge of a different and higher kind, a knowledge of things attained by a descent upon them along the series of essences, beginning with substance. It was, accordingly, of the utmost moment to Spinoza that the road from essence to essence should be a good road, and should lead, without a break, from substance to individual things. As it is, he has done little more than excite a desire for the journey and set up a guide-post. The road is not there.

It is easy to see why there should be gaps in the system of essences, or rather, why Spinoza should have furnished us with a mere sketch of a possible system, and not with a detailed plan.

It will be remembered that he has placed a gulf between the world of ideas and that of corporeal things, but has affirmed a parallelism between them. This parallelism extends to the essences related respectively to ideas and things. As the order and connection of ideas corresponds to the order and connection of things, so the order and connection of the series of "fixed and eternal things" which has its beginning in the attribute thought corresponds to the order and connection of that series which has its beginning in the attribute extension. And as individual things in the corporeal world are causes of other individual things, and ideas the causes of other ideas, so essences of higher rank are causes of those that stand below them in their own series.<sup>1</sup> But Spinoza identifies the causal relation between ideas,

<sup>1</sup> *De Int. Emendat.*, pp. 32-33. This parallelism of essences is contradicted by the little that Spinoza says concerning infinite modes (See *Epistola, LXIV*). Still it is in harmony with his system, and must be accepted as his doctrine.

and that between essences in the thought-series, with logical deduction.<sup>1</sup> Hence he believes that if we can begin with the "objective essence" or idea of the being which is the cause of all things, we may deduce therefrom the whole series of thought essences, and thus our mind may possess "objectively" the "essence, order, and connection of nature."<sup>2</sup>

It was most natural that Spinoza should pass lightly over this series of deductions, for it is impossible that they should be made. However he misconceives them, his essences are universals, and one cannot deduce in such a series the lower from the higher, the more concrete from the less. One cannot from the universal "thought" deduce any definite species of thoughts, nor can one from "extension" deduce special kinds of extension. The few instances in which Spinoza brings forward certain essences as members of the series show very clearly that his essences were taken up, so to speak, accidentally, and were not arrived at by any sort of deduction. The infinite mode which he has described as "absolutely infinite understanding" appears to have been assumed to correspond in some way to "motion and rest," the first infinite mode under the attribute extension; and this latter, which is evidently not deduced from extension, was probably suggested to him by the Cartesian doctrine of the constancy of the sum total of motion in the universe. The essence of man, about which he has so much to say, he did not deduce from any other essence. He simply assumed it and discussed it as a universal of which it was important to his purpose to treat. He gives no indication of the essence which stands next above it, whether on the physical or on the mental side.

Spinoza has himself clearly pointed out that concrete things cannot be deduced from abstractions. "We must never," he asserts, "while we are concerned with an inquiry concerning

<sup>1</sup> De Int. Emendat., loc. cit.; Ethics, I, ax. 4; II, 40, schol. 2, and V, 25.

<sup>2</sup> De Int. Emendat., loc. cit.

things, draw any conclusion from abstractions ; and we must be extremely careful not to confound those things that exist only in the understanding with those that exist outside of it."<sup>1</sup> It is for this reason that he has insisted upon the concrete and individual character of his essences, beginning with that one which is to be the first principle of nature. And yet the relations of the essences to each other and to the world of real concrete things are wholly inexplicable, as I have insisted, except on the supposition that they are universals. Substance (God) is by nature prior to its modifications;<sup>2</sup> it is active, while all its modifications are passive;<sup>3</sup> it is indivisible, while modes, as modes, can be divided.<sup>4</sup> Such language has a meaning when we regard substance as a universal, but becomes meaningless when we regard it as "the sum total of being, beyond which there is no being."

Many other passages of a similar import may be cited : " Modes are only modifications of the attributes of God ;"<sup>5</sup> " it cannot have followed from God or from one of his attributes, in so far as this is modified by a modification that is infinite or eternal ;"<sup>6</sup> body is "a mode which expresses in a definite and determinate manner the essence of God, in so far as he is considered as an extended thing."<sup>7</sup> Manifestly, the mode or modification is a concrete, and the "definite and determinate manner" in which it expresses its attribute is an individualization through accidents. This definition of mode Spinoza uses when he speaks of the essence of man, which consists of "certain modifications of God's attributes."<sup>8</sup>

The following passages are perhaps even more clear : " Such modes of thinking as love, desire, or whatever else comes under the head of emotion, do not arise unless there be present in the same individual the idea of the thing loved, desired, etc. ;"<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Int. Emendat.*, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ethics*, I, 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ethics*, II, def. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ethics*, I, 16, 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Ethics*, II, 10, cor.

<sup>4</sup> *Ethics*, I, 15, schol.

<sup>9</sup> *Ethics*, II, ax. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ethics*, I, 28.

“Individual thoughts, or this and that thought, are modes which express in a definite and determinate manner God’s nature. God, therefore, possesses the attribute, the conception of which is involved in all individual thoughts, and through which they are conceived. Hence, thought is one of the infinite attributes of God, and it expresses God’s eternal and infinite essence: that is, God is a thinking thing.”<sup>1</sup> In the former passage it is evident that “thinking” is the class notion which embraces love, desire, etc. In the latter passage, the attribute, the conception of which is involved in all individual thoughts, is the universal obtained by abstracting from all the differences which distinguish them. The infinite attributes of God are, thus, the ultimate abstractions at which one arrives by the process of extracting the core common to many individuals.

Could any doubt remain as to the nature of Spinoza’s essences, it must be set at rest by his exposition of the relation of an essence to the concrete existing things immediately subsumed under it. He argues as follows: “Hence we are able to prove in another way that there cannot be more than one substance with a given nature, and I have thought it worth while to set forth the proof here. But to do this in a methodical way, I must note—*First*, that the true definition of a thing neither involves nor expresses anything except the nature of the thing defined. Whence it follows in the *second* place, that no definition either involves or expresses a certain definite number of individuals, seeing that it expresses nothing but the nature of the thing defined. For example, the definition of the triangle expresses nothing but just the nature of the triangle, and not a certain definite number of triangles. I must note in the *third* place that every existing thing necessarily has some definite cause, by reason of which it exists. And finally in the *fourth* place that this cause, by reason of which anything exists, must either be contained in the very nature and definition of the existing thing (*for*

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 1: cf. “A Short Treatise on God, Man and his Blessedness,” I, 7.

*the reason, of course, that it belongs to the nature of such a thing to exist),* or it must be outside of it. Granted these points, it follows that if there exist in the world some definite number of individuals, there must necessarily be a cause why those individuals, and neither more nor less, exist. If, for example, there exist in the universe twenty men (I will suppose, to make the matter clearer, that they exist at the same time, and that no others have ever existed before), it will not be a sufficient explanation of the existence of the twenty men to show the cause of human nature in the abstract; but it will be further necessary to show the cause why twenty exist, and not more nor less; for (*by point third*) there must necessarily be a cause for the existence of each one. But this cause (*by points second and third*) cannot be contained in human nature itself, since the true definition of man does not involve the number twenty. Hence (*by point fourth*) the cause why these twenty men exist, and, consequently why each one exists, must necessarily be outside of each one. Therefore, the conclusion is unavoidable that everything of such a nature, that several individuals with that nature can exist, must necessarily have an external cause to bring about their existence. Now since it belongs to the nature of a substance to exist (*by what I have just shown in this scholium*), its definition must involve necessary existence, and hence its existence must be inferred from its mere definition. But from its definition (*as has just been proved from points second and third*) the existence of several substances cannot be inferred. From it, therefore, it follows necessarily that but one of a given nature exists, as was maintained."<sup>1</sup>

This passage is interesting for several reasons. In the first place, it puts beyond all doubt the fact that Spinoza's essences are universals. In the second place, it sets forth, as clearly as anyone could wish it, the reason why a descent from essence to essence by a process of deduction is an impossibility. The essence "man" does not involve (*i. e.*, contain) the number

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, 8, schol. 2.

twenty, hence one cannot deduce from this essence the twenty existing men which are to be subsumed under it. The difficulty of passing from each higher essence to the essences which stand immediately below it is, of course, identical with that of passing from an essence to individuals, but Spinoza does not recognize this explicitly. As we have seen, however, he does explicitly recognize the general impossibility of deducing things from universals. It is only because he forgets that his essences are universals, and regards them as real entities and causes, that he is able to hold to a deduction of the lower from the higher.

In the third place, it is interesting to note that Spinoza's series of essences is, as it were, suspended in the air. It does not really touch the solid earth—the world of concrete individual existences. In the "De Intellectus Emendatione" the impossibility of deducing individual things from their essences is made to rest upon the multiplicity of individuals "surpassing all calculation," and upon the unavoidable limitations set by human infirmity.<sup>1</sup> In the passage cited above it is clearly shown that the impossibility arises from the very nature of essences and their relation to whatever stands below them. In each case Spinoza admits that the world of essences does not furnish a ladder by which one may descend from God to ideas and bodies.

§ 14. *God or Substance*.—We have seen that the series of essences is so fragmentary that Spinoza's utterances regarding it are rather affirmations that there is a series, than indications of that wherein it consists. We have seen also that there is a great gulf fixed between the lowest members of the series and individual things. It should further be noted that the series terminates at the upper end in a peculiar ambiguity. Spinoza has defined God to be "a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes."<sup>2</sup> Attributes, he asserts, constitute the essence of substance.<sup>3</sup> From such statements it would seem to follow that he regarded substance as but a name for the sum of the attributes. A number of passages in the "Ethics" may be cited as supporting this

<sup>1</sup> De Int. Emendat., p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, def. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, I, def. 4.

doctrine. Substance and attributes are treated as identical in the statement, "God is eternal, that is, all God's attributes are eternal;"<sup>1</sup> attribute, like substance, is defined as that which must be conceived through itself;<sup>2</sup> it is stated that nothing exists save substance and its modes;<sup>3</sup> and the things immediately created by God are declared to be modes, not attributes, although one of Spinoza's correspondents suggests that by those things immediately created he must mean attributes.<sup>4</sup>

These statements, which seem quite clearly to indicate that by substance nothing more is meant than the sum of the attributes, appear not wholly out of harmony with the conception of it as "the sum of being, beyond which there is no being." And yet it would, I am sure, be unjust to assume that Spinoza distinctly recognized substance to be nothing more than the sum of the attributes. It would be impossible, on this supposition, to understand much of the language used in the "Ethics."<sup>5</sup> I believe that substance was not clearly conceived by him at all; but that, in a vague and indefinite way, it represented to him the unity of the attributes. The attributes cannot, however, find their unity as, from the general structure of his system, one would logically expect them to, in a higher universal; for Spinoza teaches that different attributes have nothing in common.<sup>6</sup> This appears to cut them off from each other absolutely, and the world of essences I have been discussing seems to fall apart into two quite distinct and independent worlds, that of corporeal essences and that of mental. Hence, Spinoza's *realism* cannot furnish a substance which will stand as the unity of different attributes, the meeting point of the series of thought essences and corporeal essences.

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, 10, and Epistola II.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, I, 4; 6, cor.; 15; 28.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, I, 28, schol., and Epistola LXIV.

<sup>5</sup> Ethics, I, 10, schol.; 2; 4; 5; 6; 8; 9; II, 7, schol., etc., etc.

<sup>6</sup> Ethics, I, 2; 3; 10, schol.

Nevertheless, the universe was to Spinoza a unit ; he was in search of a Being, single and infinite, and independent attributes clearly seen to be independent could not satisfy him. I cannot but think that in falling back upon substance as furnishing the unity desired, he was influenced by a lingering trace of the old notion of substance and attributes as underlying subject and inhering qualities. He conceives of mind and body as "one thing" viewed under two aspects ; and, similarly, he regards thought and extension as attributes or aspects of the one substance. But what is meant by "one thing?" If we finally abandon the notion of a "thing" still held, for instance, by Descartes,<sup>1</sup> do we not seem to have mind and body left on our hands as unreconciled entities? Wherein lies their unity if both are regarded as mere modifications of attributes? Thus I must believe that Spinoza meant by substance a something that, in a certain vague way, served to give a unity to attributes ; and that he gained this by introducing unconsciously into his system elements which had no proper place in it. He did not obtain it by completing the dual series of essences as it ought logically to be completed.

From all the foregoing it is evident that Spinoza's world of essences is a highly vague and inconsistent thing. It is a ladder supposed to reach to heaven ; but it ends above in cloud, vanishes below in mist, and consists as to its intermediate portions, not of a systematic and connected series of universals of higher and lower degrees of generality, but of a few arbitrarily chosen hypostatized essences, separated from one another by unfilled gaps. The failure to recognize clearly that its members are really universals has made it possible to exercise an arbitrary selection in making up the world of essences. Spinoza's essences are "fixed and eternal things," not derived by abstraction from individuals, as are ordinary universals. It is too much to expect of a realist that he should hypostatize all his universals. It

<sup>1</sup> Réponses aux Troisièmes Objections, II.

would result in an embarrassing wealth of essences, many of which he would be loth to regard as "fixed and eternal." This difficulty is faced by the author of the "Parmenides,"<sup>1</sup> who contents himself with merely facing it. Plato arbitrarily hypostatizes those universals which seem for some reason to be important—truth, beauty, goodness, and the like—and he overlooks the rest. Spinoza follows in his footsteps, and his system of essences, like that of Plato, bears the marks of his method of procedure.

§ 15. *The Existence of Essences.*—At the close of the preceding section of this paper I stated that, according to Spinoza's doctrine, individual bodies and individual ideas exhaust the sum total of existence—that there are no existing things which are not to be found in some sense in the one or the other of the two worlds composed of these. The questions at once arise: What shall we say then regarding the existence of essences? Are we not to attribute to these a real existence distinct from that of individual things? I answer, Spinoza's doctrine of immanence demands that we seek for the being of essences in the things of which they are the essences, and not outside of them. Essences are causes, but they are immanent causes, and must be looked for in their effects.<sup>2</sup> The notion of "immanent" causation is, of course, based upon a misconception. The idea of causality is retained, when, in the nature of the case, it ought to have been abandoned. A cause cannot be identical with its effect, for cause and effect are words used to indicate a relation between two. One may as well speak of a thing as its own antecedent or its own neighbor, as speak of it as its own cause.<sup>3</sup> Nor can the element extension present "in" several extended things, be a cause of any one of those things. It is an element *in* them, not a cause *of* them. As, however, Spinoza has turned his universals into semi-concrete things, he has really in a vague and indefinite

<sup>1</sup> Parmenides, 130.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, 18; II, 5; 6; 45 and schol.; 46; 47, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. St. Augustine, *De Trin.*, I.

way half separated them from the things subsumed under them, and given them a dim and shadowy existence of their own, an existence which allows him to set them over against these things and mark the relation by the use of the word cause. To be sure, he calls such causes immanent, and thus indicates that this separation of universal from individuals is not a real, but a fictitious separation. In other words, he denies in the adjective what he asserts in the substantive. The result of this procedure is not pure zero. The affirmation and the denial are not, so to speak, simultaneous. The adjective denies roundly that essences have any existence independent of individual things, but the substantive grants them such an existence. This leaves us with a world of essences fluctuating, ambiguous, unreal, and yet not wholly non-existent.

When I say, therefore, that Spinoza teaches that the two worlds of individual ideas and of bodies exhaust the sum total of existence, I do not mean to deny that he gives an indefinite and unreal existence to the world of essences and contrasts this world with the two former. I merely mean to state that essences cannot be regarded as having an existence really independent of and detached from the things of which they are the essences. They start out of things, as it were, and then immediately sink back again into them and disappear. Never does Spinoza clearly and unequivocally recognize them as apart from things and forming a distinct sphere of being outside. In a word, they are immanent causes, not transient; phantom causes, which do not add to the sum total of existing things. That Spinoza does not wish them to be regarded as forming a distinct and different world is especially evident, as it is interesting to note, from those passages in which he grows so ultra-realistic as quite to lose sight of the fact that his essences are universals. When he makes substance an aggregate of which individual things are parts, or conceives God's mind as made up of an endless series of finite minds, he completely identifies the highest of his

essences with individual things, his immanent cause with its effects.

With this I think I have finished all I have to say about the general nature of Spinoza's essences. It remains to discuss the journey of the soul from the world of existences to that of essences, the transition from human bondage to human freedom.

## PART III.

### FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM.

§ 16. *An Outline of Doctrine.*—In the first part of this paper it has been shown that the world of ideas is a completely independent system, carrying within itself a full explanation of all occurrences which take place within it. The parallel world of corporeal things is equally independent. Everything that takes place in the human mind must be accounted for by previous happenings in the world of ideas; and everything that takes place in the human body must be similarly accounted for by previous happenings in the corporeal world. The chain of finite causes is, in each case, unbroken and complete, excluding all reference to causes of any other description.

Had Spinoza consistently held to this doctrine, his “fixed and eternal things” would have been reduced, like the gods of Epicurus, to a state of innocuous inactivity, but he did not hold to it; and in the later Parts of the “Ethics,” we find his essences taking an active part in the management of existing things. The gulf which has separated existence and essence has been, at least in part, filled up, and there is a possibility of intercourse between these two spheres of being.

To be sure, even in Part I of the “Ethics” we find statements which appear to bring the two spheres together in a certain indefinite way. God is declared to be the efficient cause both of the existence and of the essence of things.<sup>1</sup> But in denying the possibility of deducing the existence of finite things from their essence,<sup>2</sup> and in making the chain of finite causes endless and exclusive,<sup>3</sup> Spinoza has cut off every conceivable way by which existing things may be referred to God and accounted for through his causality. His statement, then, that both existence

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, 8, schol. 2; I, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, I, 28.

and essence must be referred to God, finds no support in his own *✓* doctrine. It may fairly be criticised as he has criticised the procedure of those who remain unsatisfied with any explanation of this or that occurrence, which does not end by assigning it to "the will of God, that asylum of ignorance."<sup>1</sup>

It was, of course, impossible that Spinoza should not regard God or substance as the cause of existing things. The spirit of his philosophy demands it.<sup>2</sup> And it was also impossible that God should be reached by a journey along the endless series of finite causes. Such a journey leads nowhere; and if it did lead anywhere, it could lead only to a transient God, not an immanent. But the Spinozistic substance is a universal; its causality is immanent. Existing things are modes or modifications of God's attributes, and these attributes are not to be looked for outside of them. If, then, anything whatever in the world of existences is to be referred to God as cause, it must be possible to reach it by a descent along the series of essences, and not by passing along the chain of individual finite things. It was, thus, out of the question that Spinoza should be consistent in his denial that individual things can be deduced <sup>and yet have had a cause</sup> from essences. He saw clearly the difficulty of such a deduction, a difficulty which must be faced by every realist at every step of his descent along the series of universals; and it was this difficulty that compelled him to sunder essences and things, thus cutting off the whole world of existing things from God. No wonder that he was untrue to his own position, deliberately and explicitly taken; no wonder that he everywhere contradicts it by speaking of individual things as in God; I may add, no wonder that he makes it the highest endeavor of the mind to accomplish a deduction which he has declared impossible.

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of the independence of the world of existences made so unequivocally in the earlier. There is, of course, difficulty in adjusting to each other the two kinds of causality recognized by Spinoza, the transient and the immanent. And in treating of the way which leads from bondage to freedom one is perplexed by the fact that the clear distinctions it has been possible to draw between essences and individual things become obliterated. Essences are no longer exactly essences; individual things burst the chain of necessity which binds all existences, and take their place in the world of essences. In making this change they pass from mortality to immortality.

Whatever may be the inconsistencies contained in the Spinozistic doctrine of immortality, that doctrine itself is quite easy to understand. It is, furthermore, easy to understand how Spinoza should have been led to formulate it. Briefly sketched, the doctrine is as follows:

The human mind, an existing thing in nature, is in bondage. It is a mere mode of the attribute thought, and is causally related to other modes in the same attribute, just as the body, the corresponding corporeal thing, is causally related to other bodies. No change can take place in the mind which is not completely accounted for by previous changes in the world of ideas. The notion of freedom as uncaused action is a delusion. Those who think that they do anything whatever by the free decision of the mind are dreaming with open eyes: "The infant believes it desires milk of its own free will; the angry child that it is free in seeking revenge, and the timid that it is free in taking to flight. Again, a drunken man believes that he says of his own free will things he afterward, when sober, wishes he had left unsaid; so also an insane man, a garrulous woman, a child, and very many others of the sort, believe they speak of their own free will, while, nevertheless, they are unable to control their impulse to talk. Thus experience itself shows, no less clearly than reason, that men think themselves free only because they are conscious

of their actions and ignorant of the causes which determine them."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the mind is a part of nature and subject to natural law. It is acted upon by other ideas, and may even be destroyed as a result of such action.<sup>2</sup> It is a mere mode, a fugitive existence in time, and herein consists its bondage. What it does, it does not do of itself, but because it is necessitated to do it. Like every effect of a transient cause, it is determined from without; it is not free.<sup>3</sup>

An essence, on the contrary, is subject to no causes save those that are immanent. And as immanent causes are necessarily *within* their effects, that which is determined only by immanent causes is determined by itself. It is, hence, free. It is, furthermore, eternal; for nothing can be destroyed save by an external cause,<sup>4</sup> and external causes are here out of the question. If, therefore, the human mind, or any part of it, could be detached from its place in the chain of transient causes, and transferred to the world of essences, or brought into such a relation to that world as to be subject only to immanent causes, the mind or the part of it in question would pass from bondage to freedom, would put off mortality and be clothed upon with the immortality which pertains to essences.

But the mind consists of ideas. In so far as these are subject to transient causation they are confused, for their complete explanation is not found within the mind of which they form a part.<sup>5</sup> The mind, in so far as it consists of confused ideas, is subject to passions—it is passive.<sup>6</sup> If, however, any of the ideas which constitute the mind can be deduced directly from the attribute thought, they are no longer confused ideas, but are adequately known, for they are known with their causes, which, as immanent causes, lie within them.<sup>7</sup> And ideas thus adequately

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, III, 2, schol.

<sup>6</sup> Ethics, III, 3 and schol.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, III, 4; IV, axiom, and prop. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 48.

<sup>7</sup> Ethics, II, 40, schol. 2; III, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, III, 4.

known by any mind are no longer to be regarded as existences in the stream of time. They are known "*sub specie aeternitatis*."<sup>1</sup> It is, hence, the highest endeavor of the mind to attain to this adequate knowledge of things; to become, so far as it may, eternal.<sup>2</sup> This is the path which leads to salvation, blessedness, freedom.<sup>3</sup>

Such is, in outline, the Spinozistic doctrine of immortality. In following the exposition of it given in the "Ethics," one meets much that one is tempted to discuss at length. I shall, however, confine myself to certain things that directly concern the transference of existences to the world of essences, and shall try not to wander.

*§ 17. Man's Essence in Parts II, III, IV and V of the "Ethics."*—It should be remarked, first of all, that the transference of existences to the world of essences has only been made possible by an obliteration of those distinctions which characterize and separate these two spheres of being. As has been shown at length in the preceding section of this paper, essences are universals, and although Spinoza does not clearly recognize them to be such, and makes them inconsistently concrete, they nevertheless derive from their character as universals their peculiar and distinctive properties. It is only as universals that they can be "immanent" causes, with all that this means for Spinozism; it is only as universals that they can gather the multiplicity of finite existences into the unity which Spinoza sought in things; it is, finally, only as universals that essences are "fixed and eternal things," for in abstracting from all that marks individuals, and in extracting the core common to them, we abstract from local and temporal distinctions and obtain a result which should be, if we have properly accomplished our task, unlocalized and timeless. The eternity of essences is, hence, a result of their universal character, and we may expect to meet with difficulties

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 44, cor. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 25 and 38.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 36, schol.

when we attempt to transfer this property to anything which remains an individual.

The universal character of the essence is well brought out in that passage in the "Ethics" which discusses the relations of the essence "man" to twenty individual men.<sup>1</sup> Evidently the essence is that which they have in common, the universal under which the particulars are to be subsumed, and which does not contain any of those things which mark the particulars, as particulars. This doctrine that the essence "man" is in no sense individual is clearly emphasized in a later passage in the same Part of the "Ethics": "One man is the cause of the existence of another man, but not of his essence, for the latter is an eternal truth. Hence, as regards essence, they can exactly agree; but they must differ in existence. If, therefore, the existence of the one come to an end, it does not follow that that of the other will do so too; but if the essence of the one could be destroyed or made false, the essence of the other would be destroyed also."<sup>2</sup> Plainly this essence is a universal; it is the essence of each man in no exclusive sense; it is not a *part* of the existing thing and must not be confounded with such. The whole of each existing thing—every part of it—may be destroyed without affecting another existing thing, but the destruction of the essence concerns all the things of that class.

It may be objected that, since the essence is what the individuals have in common, it is, after all, a part of each individual. This objection I have sufficiently answered, I think, in my general discussion of the nature of universals, and I will beg the reader to turn back to that if the matter is not clear in his mind. Stated briefly the answer is, that one must not confound a true universal, as "man" in the abstract, with what is really an incomplete individual, or a part of an individual, *i. e.*, "an occurrence" of the qualities connoted by the general term "man." Such "an occurrence" belongs as truly to the world of exis-

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, 8, schol. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, 17, schol.

tences as any other element which goes to make up the individual. It has nothing "eternal" about it. It is destroyed when the individual is destroyed, and its destruction need not affect other individuals. A true essence, a universal, is, accordingly, no part of any of the individuals of which it is the essence. It is not "in" them, except in the sense indicated in the discussion above referred to. The whole of each individual belongs to the world of existences, and is subject to its laws of generation and decay. No part of it is eternal, as essences are eternal.

The difference between existences and essences, in the proper sense of that word, is clearly indicated in the passages which I have cited above. They are true to the nature of essences as universals. They raise, however, an impassable barrier between existing things and the world of essences, and they implicitly deny to man all hope of an immortality springing from a participation in the eternity of essences. But in working out his doctrine of immortality, Spinoza does not consistently use the word essence to indicate only the "fixed and eternal things" it is so important to distinguish from individual existences. In his hands an essence becomes first an individual thing, and then a part of such a thing. When it becomes the latter it is made to bear some of the attributes of a real essence. When words are thus loosely used, it is natural that distinctions between things should be lost.

At the beginning of Part II of the "Ethics," we find a definition which makes an essence simply an individual thing. The definition reads as follows: "I regard as belonging to the *essence* of a thing that which, being given, the thing is necessarily given, and which being taken away, the thing is necessarily taken away; in other words, that without which the thing, and, conversely, which without the thing, can neither be nor be conceived."<sup>1</sup> Here the essence is identical with the thing of which it is the essence, as is clearly proved by the later use to which

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, def. 2.

the definition is put.<sup>1</sup> Man's essence is nothing else than man, *i. e.*, a modification or mode which expresses God's nature in a definite and determinate manner.<sup>2</sup> The first axiom of Part II of the "Ethics" appears, it is true, to contradict this, and again to sunder essence and existence, but the spirit of the axiom does not prevail; it is the definition that wins the day. The essence of the human mind is made to consist of the idea of an individual thing actually existing, of a finite mode,<sup>3</sup> the human body.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the essence of the human mind is the human mind itself.

To this conception of the essence of the mind Spinoza adheres pretty consistently in Part III of the "Ethics." For example, desire is defined as "each man's essence or nature, in so far as it is conceived as determined to any action by any given modification of him,"<sup>5</sup> and it is inferred from this that "according as each man is affected through external causes by this or that kind of pleasure, pain, love, hatred, etc., that is, according as his nature is disposed in this or that manner, his desire will be of one sort or another; and the nature of the one desire will necessarily be as different from that of the other, as is the emotion whence the one arose from that which gave rise to the other. There are, therefore, as many kinds of desire as there are kinds of pleasure, pain, love, etc., and, hence, as many kinds as there are kinds of objects, by which we are affected."<sup>6</sup> This is entirely in harmony with Spinoza's earlier statement that the essence of the mind consists as well of inadequate ideas as of adequate<sup>6</sup>—in other words, that the essence of the mind is identical with the mind as a whole. It cannot, therefore, surprise us to find him maintaining that the pleasure and pain felt by one man differ from the pleasure and pain felt by another, in so far as the nature or essence of the one differs from the essence of the other;<sup>7</sup> and on this principle

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 10 and schol.; cor. and schol.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, II, 10, cor.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 10 and cor.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, II, 13 and 15.

<sup>5</sup> Ethics, III, 56.

<sup>6</sup> Ethics, III, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ethics, III, 57.

explaining the difference between the joy that moves the drunkard, and that which is felt by the philosopher.<sup>1</sup> There is a vast difference between such essences as these, and the "fixed and eternal thing" related to twenty men as universal to particulars. Here, not only has each man his own particular essence, which is distinct from that of every other man, but he has a shifting and inconstant essence, which may be modified in a multitude of ways.

The conception of essence which dominates Part IV of the "Ethics" differs in important respects from that maintained in Part III. To be sure, in the Preface to Part IV the latter conception is reaffirmed. It is stated that nothing in Nature can be regarded as lacking something that belongs to it, as being a blunder, "for nothing belongs to the nature of anything, except what follows from the necessity of the nature of the efficient cause; and whatever follows from the necessity of the nature of the efficient cause necessarily comes to pass." This, of course, makes an essence simply an individual thing; but the passage which immediately follows introduces a new conception, and one nearer to the conception of essence with which we started. The passage reads as follows: "As for good and evil, these terms indicate no positive element in things, considered, that is to say, in themselves. They are only modes of thinking, or notions, which we form because we compare things with one another. For one and the same thing can be at the same time good, bad and indifferent. For example, music is good for the melancholy man, and bad for him who mourns; while for the deaf man it is neither good nor bad. But, although this is so, we should, nevertheless, retain these terms. For since we desire to form an idea of man—a pattern, as it were, of human nature, upon which we may gaze—it will be of service to us to retain these terms in the sense in which I have spoken. Therefore, I shall hereafter mean by 'good' what we certainly know to be a means by the

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, III, 57, schol.

aid of which we may come to resemble more and more the pattern of human nature that we have set before us. By 'evil,' on the other hand, I shall mean what we certainly know hinders us from reflecting that pattern. Furthermore, I shall say that men are more perfect or less perfect, in proportion as they resemble more or less closely this pattern. For it should specially be noted that when I speak of a man as passing from a less to a greater perfection, and conversely, I do not mean that he is changed from one essence or form to another (a horse, for example, is as much destroyed by being changed into a man, as by being changed into an insect); but I mean that we conceive his power of acting, in so far as we comprehend this through his own nature, to be increased or diminished."

This "pattern," thus modestly introduced, is the type-notion, formed through comparison of things with one another. Taken abstractly, it is the essence "man," which is "in" each individual man, a true universal—idealized, it is true, as Plato idealized his essences, but still at bottom simply a universal. And the essence of each individual man, which Spinoza now conceives as a part of him, is "an occurrence" of those elements which, taken abstractly, constitute the essence "man." That all this is not at first sight clear is owing to the fact that Spinoza idealizes the universal "man," and makes it not merely that which individual men actually have in common, but also a pattern to which individuals may approach, and from which they may fall away. It is a something perfect in its kind; perfect, I mean, in the usual sense of that word, and not in the Spinozistic. But it should be noted that individuals may vary from this ideal only within strict limits. They must remain individuals of a certain kind, they must fall within their own class, and possess the properties common to all individuals of that class. These properties are embodied in the "essence," and if any individual loses these, its essence is destroyed. As to the essence of an individual being "an occurrence" of these qualities, and thus a part of the

individual, this is clearly indicated in the closing words of the citation given above : "we conceive his power of acting, in so far as we comprehend this *through his own nature*, to be increased or diminished." The man's *own nature* is now not the whole man, but a part of him. It is the part which assimilates him to the "pattern" in question.

This conception of a man's essence as a part of him runs all through Part IV of the "Ethics," with only occasional lapses into the conception prominent in Part III.<sup>1</sup> A man's essence is still an existence, and in the world of existences, but it is not the whole of an individual. Virtue or power, in so far as it relates to man, is defined as "the very essence or nature of man, in so far as he has the power of effecting certain things that can be comprehended solely through the laws of his own nature."<sup>2</sup> Man is said to be passive, in so far as he is a part of Nature, and not independent of other parts ; that is, he is passive when something arises in him which cannot be deduced solely from the laws of his own nature.<sup>3</sup> Thus man consists of two parts : of his essence, which is here, it must not be forgotten, an existence, the "occurrence" discussed above ; and of certain extraneous elements which are not included in that essence. That man should not be a part of Nature, and that he should be incapable of undergoing any changes except such as can be understood by his nature alone, is declared impossible. The power of man, in so far as it is explained through his own essence is "a part of the infinite power of God or Nature."<sup>4</sup> Here it is emphasized, in the spirit of Part III, that the whole of man is an "existence." But a part of that "existence" is, in the sentences immediately following, separated from the rest, and made to hover on the boundary between existences and essences. It is becoming, as

<sup>1</sup> For example, Ethics, IV, 18, 22, 26, and 39, schol.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, IV, def. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, IV, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, IV, 4.

the reader will see, detached from its place in the world of existences: "Were it possible for man to undergo no changes, except such as can be understood through the nature of man alone, it would follow that he could not perish, but would always necessarily exist." I shall not now comment upon this reference to the immortality of essences, as I wish to do that later, but the passage is interesting as showing that Spinoza has clearly distinguished between the "occurrence" of "man," and the other elements which go to make up the individual, and has even lost sight of the fact that he is dealing with an "occurrence." He seems to be back again among the "fixed and eternal things" which are not subject to the laws of natural necessity.

The fact that a man's essence is an "occurrence" of those elements which are to be found in all the members of the class comes out well in Spinoza's argument to prove that in so far as men live in obedience to reason they are in harmony with one another. Only that is bad for us which is contrary to our nature.<sup>1</sup> What is in harmony with our nature is good.<sup>2</sup> But whatever follows from human nature in so far as it is defined by reason, has human nature as its proximate cause. Hence it follows that men, in so far as they live in obedience to reason, do only such things as are good for human nature, and, consequently, good for each individual man. In other words, they do only what is in harmony with each man's nature.<sup>3</sup> In this argument, each man's nature does not mean the whole of each man. When it means this, as it does in Part III, men's natures differ, as Spinoza has shown. Here man's nature is only that part of each man which justifies us in classing him with others, and, naturally, men's natures are in harmony. The difference between the two conceptions stands out in the proof of the thesis, that the desire which springs from reason cannot be excessive.<sup>4</sup> Such desire is defined as "the very essence or nature of man, in

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, IV, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, IV, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, IV, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, IV, 61.

so far as this is conceived as determined to those activities which are adequately conceived through man's essence alone." Desire, taken generally, is defined (the definition of Part III slightly modified,) as "the very essence of man, in so far as this is conceived as determined in any manner to some activity." In the latter case the essence is the whole man, and a variable thing; in the former, it is a part of the man, and unvarying.

It seems unnecessary for me to multiply citations. As I have said, the conception of an essence which characterizes Part IV of the "Ethics"<sup>1</sup> makes it an existence, but not the whole of an individual thing. It is "an occurrence" of the elements which mark the type. And, as I have also said, Spinoza tends to forget that he is dealing with "an occurrence," and to confuse his individual essences with true essences, which are not existences at all.

As touching this last point, it is important to keep in mind the fact, that the essence with which Spinoza is now dealing, although it is something individual, is independent of the order of Nature. In so far as man is determined by that part of him which is his essence, he is active, not passive; free, not determined from without. In so far as he is determined by anything else, he is in bondage.<sup>2</sup> Let us now see what part of the mind it is that is thus free.

We are told in Part III of the "Ethics," where the word essence is used to include the whole mind, that the essence of the mind consists of adequate and of inadequate ideas.<sup>3</sup> The activities of the mind arise only from adequate ideas. That is to say, the mind is the sole cause of the effects which arise from it, in so far as it contains the former. In so far as it contains the latter it is passive, and determined from without.<sup>4</sup> Thus, passive states can be attributed to the mind only in so far as it is a part

<sup>1</sup> See Ethics, IV, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 33, 36, 37, 52, 56, 59.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, III, 1; IV, 2, 4, 23, 26, et passim.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, III, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, III, 1 and 3.

of Nature, and subject to the sort of causality which binds together existing things.<sup>1</sup>

In Part IV this doctrine is reaffirmed. We are declared to be passive only when something arises in us of which we are but the partial cause. That is, we are passive only in so far as we are a part of Nature which cannot be conceived by itself and detached from other parts. Whatever arises in us in so far as we are this, cannot be deduced solely from the laws of our own nature.<sup>2</sup> This part of us, our own nature, is our essence.

But the essence of reason is the mind, in so far as it clearly and distinctly understands; that is, in so far as it has adequate ideas, or ideas deduced directly from an attribute of God.<sup>3</sup> Thus reason is man's true power of action or virtue,<sup>4</sup> and to act rationally is to perform just those actions which follow from the necessity of our nature considered in itself alone.<sup>5</sup> And since that which the mind conceives under the guidance of reason, it conceives under the form of eternity or necessity,<sup>6</sup> the adequate ideas in the mind, as the result of a logical deduction from what is changeless and eternal, are, of course, detached from the stream of things in time. They are no longer a "part of Nature." And since they are thus detached, and are the sole cause of any effects which may flow from them, the man who is determined to action by them, that is, who is determined by his own nature or essence, is free and not in bondage. He who is determined by confused ideas is a slave.<sup>7</sup>

Such is the doctrine regarding man's essence contained in Parts III and IV of the "Ethics." It is not always easy to follow the halting and tortuous course of Spinoza's reasonings. This is due in part to the fact that he has undertaken to develop a psychology and a system of ethics, as well as to unfold a plan of salvation, and he has introduced into his discussion much that

<sup>1</sup>Ethics, III, 3, schol.

<sup>5</sup>Ethics, IV, 59.

<sup>2</sup>Ethics, IV, 2 and 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ethics, IV, 62.

<sup>3</sup>Ethics, IV, 26; and II, 40, schol. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Ethics, IV, 66, schol.

<sup>4</sup>Ethics, IV, 52.

is not logically called for in the development of his doctrine. His reflections are often profound, suggestive, and in themselves valuable, but they result in making less evident the course of his argument. Nevertheless, to the careful reader the transitions in Spinoza's thought are, I think, sufficiently clear; and one can even find for them a reasonably satisfactory psychological explanation.

As we have seen, Spinoza started out with a view of the nature of essences which implicitly recognizes that they are universals. They are "fixed and eternal things" not to be regarded as forming part of the world of existences: witness "man" and the twenty men. Next we find them nothing more nor less than individual existing things—the essence of the mind and the mind itself are identical. This seems a great jump, and, indeed, it is such. But it should be borne in mind that in Part II Spinoza has made the mind nothing more than a highly complex group of ideas, and completely parallel to the body; that he has emphasized the subjection of all ideas and corporeal things to the law of transient causation that obtains in the world of existences; and that he has ended with a vigorous assault upon free will, as commonly understood. Part III opens with a protest against the current treatment of the emotions, which sinned against this view: "Most of those who have written on the emotions and on human conduct seem to be treating, not of natural things that obey the general laws of nature, but of things that lie outside of nature. Indeed, they appear to conceive of man in nature as a realm within a realm. For they regard man as rather disturbing than following the order of nature, as having absolute power over his actions, and as being determined solely by himself. Furthermore, human infirmity and inconstancy they attribute, not to the general power of nature, but to I know not what defect in human nature, which, accordingly, they bewail, deride, despise, or, more commonly, denounce; and he who has learned to carp the most eloquently or the most ingeniously at the infirmity of the human

mind is regarded as a prophet." Spinoza proposes to do very differently, and for this reason: "Nothing happens in nature that can be attributed to a defect in it; for nature is always the same, and its virtue or power of acting is everywhere one and the same; that is, the laws and rules of nature, according to which all things come to pass and undergo their changes of form, are everywhere and always the same; consequently there should be also one and the same method of comprehending the nature of things of whatever kind, namely, through the general laws and rules of nature."<sup>1</sup> In all this it is evident that there is prominent in Spinoza's mind the notion of the naturalness and inevitableness of all that happens. Spinoza is treating of the emotions, he is dealing with existences; and he places all existences upon the same plane, as he ought to do, in view of the general doctrine of existences which he has developed.

But even in Part III there appears the germ of "a realm within a realm," in the distinction between the activities of the mind and its passions, its adequate and its inadequate ideas.<sup>2</sup> Both are, however, parts of the one mind, and together compose its essence, for is not everything that happens natural and inevitable? Moreover, the mind, in all its parts, strives to persevere in its being, and all parts would continue to exist indefinitely, were they not prevented by the action of external causes.<sup>3</sup> Of this peculiar immortality I shall speak more at length when I discuss the eternity of the mind's essence, but I may merely state here that this appears to me to give an additional explanation of Spinoza's extension of the word essence to cover the whole of the mind. It seems to assimilate the two parts of the mind to one another.

In Part IV the essence of the mind is, as we have seen, a part of it. In Part III, where it is attempted to treat the emotions merely as natural phenomena, it is natural that the essence of the mind should be the whole mind. But in Part IV this is impossible;

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, III, pref.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, III, 1 and 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, III, 9.

for Spinoza is there developing a system of Ethics, and to Ethics a "pattern" of human nature is a necessity. The Stoic maxim that virtue consists in following nature becomes simply meaningless unless it be tacitly assumed that the word "nature" is to be understood in a definite and restricted sense. If everything that happens is equally natural, every man equally and at all times follows nature, and he does nothing else. What is done tacitly by Epictetus and by Antoninus is done by Spinoza, and for the same reason. It had to be done, if he intended to treat of Ethics. Accordingly, in Part IV we find the mind's essence to be really "a realm within a realm," and those actions which find their explanation in it are carefully distinguished from other happenings. This is, of course, not in harmony with what is said in the preface to Part III, but there is some excuse for the transition; it is not purely arbitrary.

As to the identification of the adequate ideas in the mind with the "pattern" part of each man: We have seen that such ideas are deduced directly from the attribute thought, are independent of the order of causes in the world of existences, and are conceived, as reason always conceives things, without relation to time and under a certain form of eternity.<sup>1</sup> They really belong, hence, to the world of essences rather than to that of existences, and they very fittingly are conceived as composing the essence of the mind in which they are found.<sup>2</sup> And since the "pattern" part of man's mind is now his essence, it is identified with the adequate ideas in his mind.<sup>3</sup> The movement of Spinoza's thought appears to me plain. He is far from consistent, for, as I have already had occasion to remark, the essence in question, the "pattern" part of a man, is but "an occurrence" of the elements which, taken abstractly, distinguish the universal; and such "an occurrence" is a mere existence, as completely in bondage to time and circumstance as any other element in an

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 40, schol. 2; 44, cor. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, IV, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, IV, pref. and 35.

individual thing. And yet it is very easy to forget that, in speaking of such "an occurrence," one is not dealing with a true essence; a timeless and independent thing. Thus the essence treated of in Part IV of the "Ethics" is identified with the adequate ideas in the mind, and while it remains part of an individual man, it is nevertheless regarded as semi-detached from its place in the world of existences, and as having some of the properties of a true essence.

Such is, I think, the justification of Spinoza's identification of the essence of Part IV with the adequate ideas which are to play so important a rôle in Part V. He nowhere attempts to prove that the common elements of (mental) human nature are adequate ideas; but this could hardly be expected of him. To do this he would have had to carry out some of the deductions of which he so constantly speaks, but which remain an unattainable ideal.

In Part V the "pattern" idea almost<sup>1</sup> drops out of notice, and the essence of the mind is simply that part of it which consists of adequate ideas. Spinoza has here taken in hand the task of indicating the path to Freedom, the true remedy against the emotions. As freedom consists in an independence of the chain of natural causation, and that part of the mind is free which has become detached from its place in the world of existences and has taken its place in the world of essences; as, furthermore, ideas may become adequate one by one, and different minds, or the same mind at different times, may be composed of adequate ideas in very varying degrees,<sup>2</sup> it was but natural that in this part of the Ethics Spinoza should not dwell much upon the conception of the mind's essence prominent in Part IV. I have pointed out that his identification of the "pattern" of human nature with the adequate ideas in the mind was not based upon any demonstration that the ideas composing this "pattern" were

<sup>1</sup> Note, however, V, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 20, schol., and 40, cor.

adequate. He was simply influenced by the fact that to him an essence was both a type-notion and a something independent of the order of finite causes. It was, accordingly, possible for him to forget that he had made the two identical, and to confine his attention to the subject of adequate ideas alone. In Part V he is, as I have said, concerned with the way which leads to Freedom, and this way consists in the acquisition of adequate ideas simply, not necessarily in the acquisition of a particular group of adequate ideas.

A passion, Spinoza maintains, ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, we can form a clear and distinct conception of every modification of the body,<sup>2</sup> and, hence, of every emotion, which is the idea of such a modification.<sup>3</sup> Thus everyone has the power of knowing himself and his emotions clearly and distinctly, if not wholly, at least in part, and consequently has the power of making himself less subject to them. When an emotion is thus known, it is separated from the thought of an external cause and is joined to "true thoughts"<sup>4</sup> As long as we are not harassed by emotions that are contrary to our nature, the mind is not hampered, and it has the power of forming clear and distinct ideas, and of arranging and concatenating the modifications of the body according to the intellectual order.<sup>5</sup> That is to say, we can break the bonds of natural necessity, and introduce a causality of a different kind.

Theoretically, as it appears, the power of the mind is unlimited. Spinoza has said that we can form a clear and distinct conception of every modification of the body. He reaffirms this in the words: "The mind can bring it to pass that all the modifications, or the images of things, are referred to the idea of God."<sup>6</sup> Practically, he does not seem to consider this as possible, it being evident from several passages that he did not hope for unqualified

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, V, 4, schol.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ethics, V, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 4, cor.

<sup>6</sup> Ethics, V, 14.

success in the effort to attain complete freedom.<sup>1</sup> We may therefore expect only a part of the mind to "abide." The rest of it, composed as it is of ideas which have their place in the world of existences, and resist a transference to that of essences, must "perish."<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from what precedes that the part of the mind which abides is not precisely an existence, and is yet not precisely an essence. It is chrysalis and butterfly combined. The essences of the realist are, as I have maintained in the preceding section of this paper, necessarily not pure universals. They always have a flavor of the concrete. And Spinoza's essences, the "fixed and eternal things" related to individuals as "man" is related to the twenty men, I have shown to be the hypostatized universals of the realist, endowed with the inconsistent attributes usually granted such entities. They are both abstractions and concrete things. When I say, therefore, that the part of the mind which abides is not precisely an essence, I do not mean to use the word essence with extreme rigor, and apply it only to true universals, abstractions. I mean to include the inconsistent semi-concrete abstractions cherished by the realist. I mean only to exclude what has lost or almost lost all flavor of universality. The whole of an individual mind, or the part of an individual mind, clearly recognized as the whole or the part of an individual thing, is not to be considered an essence in the sense in which I am using the word. In dealing with such we are dealing with a mere existence. Accordingly the essence of the mind treated of in Part III of the "Ethics," and that discussed in Part IV, are not properly essences at all. But how of the essence in Part V, that portion of the mind which "abides?" Has not Spinoza transferred this from the world of existences to that of essences, and thus given it a right to a new name? I answer, he has merely forced it into a new class by obliterating class distinctions

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 4, schol.; 10, schol.; 20, schol.; 31, schol.; 38; 40, cor.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 40, cor.

of fundamental importance to his own reasonings. The kingdom of heaven has been taken by violence. The essences of even the most ardent realist ought to have about them some flavor of universality. Spinoza has not really transferred a portion of the mind to the world of essences. It remains an individual thing, without universality, and without any similarity to true essences; and yet, apparently, cut loose from other things and adopted into a new and strange relationship. All Spinoza's essences ("fixed and eternal things") are more or less concrete, but this is too openly and palpably concrete. If this be an essence, the difference between existences and essences becomes of no significance. On the other hand, Spinoza distinguishes between the eternal part of the mind and other existences; it is to abide and they are to perish. He thus endows it with one of the prerogatives of an essence. But with what color of justice can this be done when the thing in question is not really an essence, but is an existence? This brings me to the question of the true nature of the Spinozistic immortality, and the right of any existing thing to partake of it.

§ 18. *The Eternity of Essences.*—In the preceding division of this monograph, I have pointed out that the great stumbling-block of all those who busy themselves with universals is the tendency to turn abstractions into concrete things, by adding what, in the nature of the case, should rigorously be excluded. I have shown that, between "man" in the abstract and this or that "occurrence" of the "man" qualities there is a very important difference. A true universal is free from all spatial or temporal limitations, just for the reason that it is by abstracting from all such distinctions that one obtains a true universal. The "x" in this object and the "x" in that are similar, but they are not strictly identical, nor is either of them identical with "x" in the abstract. The "x" in any object is "x" with a difference, and is not pure "x."

Accordingly, a true universal cannot exist here or there, or at

this time or that. Indeed, it cannot properly be said to *exist* at all, unless the word be used in a sense quite different from that in which it is used when speaking of concrete things. A true universal forms no part of the system of existing things, and has no place in it.

This is equally true of all universals, provided only they be kept pure. "Being" in the abstract is no particular being, and exists in no time or place; but "cat" in the abstract is, also, no particular cat, and is equally free from local and temporal entanglements. "Thought" and "extension," "man" and "house," "x" and "y," stand, in so far as they are universals, upon the same plane. They belong to no place and no time, and are excluded from the system of concrete things which may properly be said to exist.

The independence of time-relations enjoyed by universals has from an early date in the history of speculation been marked by the use of the word *eternity*. Hence, Spinoza follows an ancient custom in applying to his essences the word *eternal*, to indicate their freedom from time-relations. Nevertheless, I cannot but regard this use of the word as unfortunate. The word suggests, and always has suggested, that the thing to which it is applied will not pass away, but will endure through endless time. As applied to essences it should not carry with it this connotation. It is quite true that an essence cannot change, for change implies two conditions or states related in time. It cannot cease to be, for, if these words mean anything, they imply existence in time followed by non-existence in time. But it should equally be borne in mind that an essence is as incapable of remaining unchanged as it is of changing. It takes quite as much time to remain unchanged as it does to change. And an essence is as incapable of continuing to exist as it is of ceasing to exist. It takes time to continue to exist. Thus it will not do to deny of essences certain time-relations, and then go on using words implying certain others. No words implying time-relations of any sort should

be applied to them. Hence, if it be true that the essence "man" cannot cease to exist, since such an essence has no relation to time, it is equally true that "man" never has existed, does not exist now, and never will exist. Any sort of eternity attributable to "man" must not, then, consist in a continuance of existence.

A careful perusal of Part V of the "Ethics" makes it evident that Spinoza had but imperfectly grasped the significance of the timelessness of essences. When properly understood, it is seen to be a rather insignificant thing; and it is only because it has been misunderstood that so much emphasis has been laid upon it in the history of philosophy and theology. The eternity of essences is a sort of immortality which belongs of right only to pure universals, to abstractions, and it does not indicate the continued existence of those things to which it may be attributed. Spinoza's misconception of its nature leads him into error in both of these particulars. He attributes eternity to individual things, and he confuses this eternity with a continuance of existence, thus seeming to gain for man a sort of immortality not widely different from that to which so many generations have looked forward with hope and expectation. "This idea," he writes,<sup>1</sup> "that expresses the essence of the body under the form of eternity, is, as I have said, a definite mode of thinking, which belongs to the essence of the mind, and which is necessarily eternal. Yet we cannot be made to remember having existed before the body, since there can be no traces of it in the body, and since eternity cannot be defined in terms of time, and cannot have any relation to time. Nevertheless, we feel and know that we are eternal. The mind perceives those things that it conceives by an act of the understanding no less than those that it has in the memory. The eyes of the mind, with which it sees and observes things, are themselves proofs. Hence, although we do not remember having existed before the body, yet we feel that our mind, in so

<sup>1</sup> Ethics V, 23, schol.

far as it involves the essence of the body under the form of eternity, is eternal, and that this its existence cannot be defined in terms of time or described as duration. Our mind, consequently, can be said to endure, and its existence can be measured by a definite time, only in so far as it involves the actual existence of the body; and only in so far has it the power of measuring in time the existence of things, and of conceiving them as having duration."

The eternal part of the mind is here "a definite mode of thinking;" that is, it is an existence, and not a true essence. Yet it is made to partake of the eternity of essences. And through all Spinoza's denials that this eternity has any relation to time, it is easy to see that he conceived it as some sort of a continuance in existence. "The human mind," he affirms in the proposition to which the above citation serves as scholium, "cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains, which is eternal."

Upon the temporal content of Spinoza's eternity I shall comment a little later. First I wish to examine his attribution of eternity to existences.

§ 19. *Eternity and the Individual.*—I shall not here discuss at length the doctrine of the different kinds of knowledge developed in the "Ethics," the "De Intellectus Emendatione," and the "Short Treatise." I have treated of this elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> It is sufficient to state that Spinoza distinguishes between memory and imagination, on the one hand, and reason, on the other. Memory and imagination have to do with individual images; reason is the faculty of general knowledge. The former faculties are, thus, busied with existences, while the latter occupies itself with essences. Hence the images of memory and imagination are subject to local and temporal limitations from which the ideas apprehended by the reason are free.<sup>2</sup> In drawing these distinctions

<sup>1</sup> The Philosophy of Spinoza, 2d ed., N. Y., 1894, pp. 309-12.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, 11, 44 et seq.

Spinoza is not bringing forward anything new, but is following in the footsteps of his predecessors.

The reason or understanding perceives things, then, without relation to time and "*sub specie aeternitatis*." It does this just because it is the faculty of general knowledge and has to do with universals: "the foundations of reason are the notions which represent the properties common to all things, but do not represent the essence of any particular thing; and which, therefore, must be conceived without any relation to time, under a certain form of eternity."<sup>1</sup>

Had Spinoza kept clearly in mind that the eternity of which he is speaking can be attributed only to a universal, he would not have declared the human mind eternal. But he could not hold to this distinction. The confusion of thought which permits a realist to turn his universals into concrete things and still regard them as having the properties of universals, can easily render the line which separates the universal and the individual so faint and undecided as to make it useless as a line of demarcation. In the proposition immediately following the one whose corollary I have just quoted, the distinction Spinoza has so clearly marked is again lost. The reasoning is as follows: "The idea of an individual thing, actually existing, necessarily involves both the essence and the existence of that thing. But individual things cannot be conceived without God; and since they have for their cause God, in so far as he is considered under the attribute of which they are modes, the ideas of them must necessarily involve the conception of their attribute, that is, must involve the eternal and infinite essence of God.

"By existence I do not here mean duration, that is, existence in so far as it is abstractly conceived, and, as it were, a certain kind of quantity; I am speaking of existence in its very nature, which is attributed to individual things, because an infinity of things follow in infinite ways from the eternal necessity of God's

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 44, cor. 2.

nature; I am speaking, I say, of the very existence of individual things, in so far as they are in God. For, although each individual thing is determined by some other to a particular mode of existence, the force by which each persists in existing follows from the eternal necessity of the nature of God."

Here we have a good instance of the struggle between immanent and transient causes—the "force" by which each thing "persists in existing" belongs somehow to the world of essences, while its "particular mode of existence" is due to transient causation. And it is clear that to Spinoza's mind essences now appear rather as causes than as universals. Certainly there does not appear to be anything universal about the force by which an individual thing "persists in existing," a force which Spinoza defines as the "very existence" of an individual thing. "The idea of an individual thing, actually existing," is wholly and completely an existence in the world of existences. In finding in it anything of an eternal nature Spinoza is evidently struggling with a misapprehension. He has placed an essence *in* an existence, and has forgotten that it is only an "occurrence" of an essence that can be in an individual. "Very existence," *i. e.*, existence in the abstract, cannot be the existence of any thing. Spinoza does thus attach it to an individual thing, and yet ascribes to it the eternity of essences.

In Part III of the "Ethics" this distinction between the force by which things persist in existing, or their "very existence," and the particular mode of existence which they owe to transient causes is taken up again and worked over at some length.<sup>1</sup> There the confusion between essence and "occurrence" is even more complete; and, in harmony with the prevailing spirit of Part III, the world of true essences falls into the background, the essences of things discussed become mere existences, and the eternity of the universal gives place to an indefinite

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, III, props. 4-9.

existence in time. Thus Spinoza gains for the mind a certain immortality, which is analogous to the eternity of essences, but is not independent of time. It may not inappropriately be called the immortality of inertia, and it does not seem at first glance absurd to attribute it to individual existences. The substance of the propositions in which the doctrine is developed is as follows:

Spinoza argues that nothing can be destroyed save by an external cause. This, he maintains, is self-evident for the reason that the definition of a thing affirms the essence of that thing, but does not deny it. Hence, as long as we give our attention merely to the thing itself, and not to external causes, we shall be able to find in it nothing that can destroy it. Thus each thing strives to persevere in its being; and the endeavor with which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself. This endeavor does not involve any finite time, but indefinite time, "since, if no external cause destroy it, the thing will always continue to exist through the same power through which it now exists." Like other individual things, the human mind strives to persevere indefinitely in its being; and since its essence is composed both of adequate and inadequate ideas, it strives to do this both in so far as it has the one and in so far as it has the other.

In these propositions Spinoza has wandered far from the realm of true essences. The force for existence is attributed even to the inadequate ideas in the mind, the perishable images of memory and imagination. To make a thing immortal it now appears unnecessary to convert it into an essence, or even to bring it into any sort of relation to the world of essences, unless the latter be necessary as an expedient for detaching the thing in question from its context in the world of existences. The only requisite is to cut around the thing, as it were, and ward off the untoward influence of external or transient causes. The thing, although a mere existence, seems to suffice to itself, when let alone. Thus the adequate ideas in the mind, although mere

existences, may partake of this immortality. They are detached from the stream of existences, although they remain in it.

I have said that this immortality of inertia is analogous to the eternity of essences. It appears to me that both doctrines have their source in the same error, namely, in an imperfectly accomplished abstraction. The eternity of an essence is due merely to the fact that one has abstracted from time-relations, and fixed attention only on the content of the thing itself. As I shall show a little later, Spinoza and others have performed this abstraction imperfectly and retained vague temporal suggestions where all thought of time is supposed to be absent. In the same way, when Spinoza fixes attention "merely" on an individual thing, and then can see no reason why the thing should not continue to exist indefinitely, he has but imperfectly performed his task, for the task he has set himself is an impossible one. An individual thing is a given individual thing not merely on account of its content; it is just that particular individual and no other, because of its place in the system of things. It is this relation to concrete things that makes it a concrete thing and not an abstraction. To Spinoza the thing he is supposed to be considering by itself is still a particular individual thing, and is left lying where it was before, in the stream of time. The only difference between the eternity of the essence and the immortality of inertia attributed to the existence lies in the fact that in the latter case the abstraction is more palpably incomplete. In both cases a negative virtue is turned into a positive one; for, as in the case of essences timelessness is really read as meaning endless continuance in existence, so in the latter case the fact that no reason is seen why a thing should cease to exist, is taken as meaning that there is every reason why it should continue. In developing his doctrine of the immortality of inertia, Spinoza reasons much as he does when he is treating of the eternity of essences. The transition from the latter to the former is a sufficiently natural one. It was only necessary to forget more completely than

usual that the world to which he wishes to reconcile existing things is a world of universals.

It is interesting to notice that Spinoza does not use the word eternity in describing this immortality of inertia. He appears to feel himself that he has gotten too far away from true essences, and to recognize that a continuance of existence through "indefinite time" is, after all, but a spurious eternity, and has no proper place in his philosophy. Accordingly, in Part V we find him turning back to an immortality of a different kind, to the eternity of the essence.

"We conceive things as actual," he states, "in two ways: either in that we conceive them as existing with relation to a definite time and place, or in that we conceive them as contained in God, and as following from the necessity of the divine nature. Those things, however, that we conceive as true or real in this second way, we conceive under the form of eternity, and the ideas of them involve the eternal and infinite essence of God, as I have shown in II, 45, and in the scholium to that proposition."<sup>1</sup>

Here the reference is to passages in Part II that I have cited; passages that do not, it is true, contain as clear a recognition of the nature of timeless eternity as that which immediately precedes them, but which are, nevertheless, unmistakably concerned with the eternity of essences, and not, like the passages in Part III, with the indefinite duration of mere existences. Everywhere in Part V it is the former that is insisted upon, and its timelessness is emphasized. Its true nature, as a property of the universal, is always in the background of Spinoza's thought; and at times it comes so into the foreground, that one almost wonders how he could have failed to see that no individual thing could be made to partake of it. For example, in defining adequate ideas, those ideas which are appended to the system of essences, and partake of eternity, he speaks as follows:

"The things we clearly and distinctly comprehend are either

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 29, schol.

the common properties of things, or what is inferred from these, and consequently their images are the more frequently aroused in us. Therefore it is easier for us to consider other things simultaneously with these than with other images, and, hence, it is easier to join their images with these than with others."<sup>1</sup>

In this passage it is clearly indicated that the reason has to do with universals. Moreover, the adequate ideas in the mind are not merely referred to the reason and somehow appended to the system of essences, but they are themselves treated as in some sense universal. They are "frequently" aroused in us. Nevertheless, they are called "images," and still hold a place in the world of existences among other existing things. Spinoza has manifestly confused, here as elsewhere, essence and "occurrence"—the former eternal because universal, and the latter incapable of sharing this eternity because of the limitations of the individual. Even were it possible to deduce a number of individuals from an essence (a task which, it will be remembered, Spinoza has shown to be an impossible one), it would not be possible to carry over to the individuals a property which belongs to the universal just because it is not an individual.

From what precedes it is, I think, evident that Spinoza was able to attribute eternity to adequate ideas, first, because he did not always bear clearly in mind the true significance of the eternity of essences; and second, because, having referred such ideas to the order of immanent causes and declared them free from the order of transient, he overlooked the fact that he was dealing with existences. In Part III the former is more especially the case; in Part V, the latter. In either case, the distinction between essence and existence has become obscured.

§ 20. *Time and Eternity; the "Ethics."*—I have already shown that Spinoza sometimes recognized with a good deal of clearness that the eternity of essences pertains to them in virtue of their character as universals. Of course, since he was a realist, the

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, V, 12.

true abstract nature of the universal did not stand out with distinctness before his mind ; and it is but natural that we should find him falling into inconsistencies when he comes to treat of its eternity. Nevertheless, he has glimpses of the truth ; and he sees, as many realists who have preceded him have seen, that the eternity of essences ought to imply a freedom from temporal limitations. Accordingly we find him reiterating that eternity is not to be confused with duration in time, but is something of a wholly different nature.

Lest, in bringing forward evidence to show that Spinoza really did confuse eternity and time, I may be accused of overlooking his insistence upon the non-temporal character of the former, I shall quote a few passages in which he lays emphasis upon the distinction between them.

Eternity he defines, in Part I of the "Ethics," as "existence itself in so far as it is conceived as following necessarily from the mere definition of an eternal thing." Such existence, he continues, "like the essence of a thing, is conceived as an eternal truth ; it cannot, therefore, be explained by duration or time, even though duration be conceived as without beginning and without end."<sup>1</sup> Later he maintains that "there is in eternity no *when, before, or after.*"<sup>2</sup> In a passage in Part II, which I have already quoted, he states that "the foundations of reason are the notions which represent the properties common to all things, but do not represent the essence of any particular thing ; and which, therefore, must be conceived without any relation to time, under a certain form of eternity."<sup>3</sup> In Part V there are several passages which are sufficiently unequivocal. One of the most striking of these<sup>4</sup> I have given at length in Section 18. It contains such statements as : "eternity cannot be defined in terms of time, and

<sup>1</sup> Ethics I, def. 8 and explanation.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, I, 33, schol. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 44, cor. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, V, 23, schol.

cannot have any relation to time;" and "although we do not remember having existed before the body, yet we feel that our mind, in so far as it involves the essence of the body under the form of eternity, is eternal, and that this its existence cannot be defined in terms of time or described as duration." Again we read: "eternity cannot be expressed by duration;"<sup>1</sup> and a little later<sup>2</sup> are informed that: "If we turn our attention to the commonly received opinion, we shall see that men are indeed conscious of the eternity of their mind, but confound it with duration, and ascribe it to the imagination or memory, which they think remains after death."

Such is Spinoza's language when he undertakes directly to define or describe eternity. His statements are unequivocal and emphatic, and did they but stand alone, there could be little question as to the nature of his doctrine. But they do not stand alone. They are contradicted by a multitude of other passages which make it evident that Spinoza did not fully realize the significance of the timeless eternity of essences. Just as his essences refuse to remain pure universals, but tend to become vaguely concrete; so his eternity refuses to remain timeless, but tends to become vaguely temporal. This comes out very plainly in the latter half of Part V. Quite unmistakable are such sentences as the following:

"This completes all I have to say as regards this present life. . . . Therefore it is now time to pass to the things that pertain to the duration of the mind without relation to the body;"<sup>3</sup> "The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains, which is eternal;"<sup>4</sup> "Yet we cannot be made to remember having existed before the body, since there can be no traces of it in the body, and since eternity

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 34, schol.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 20, schol.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, V, 23.

cannot be defined in terms of time, and cannot have any relation to time. Nevertheless we feel and know that we are eternal."<sup>1</sup>

The contrast between the "present" life and "the duration of the mind without relation to the body" is simply the contrast between present time and time past and future. Spinoza has even inconsistently used the word duration. And the something of the mind which is not destroyed with the body, but "remains," is a something which remains in time. It continues to exist after the body is destroyed. If all notion of time be abstracted, Spinoza's statement becomes meaningless. There is a similar implication in the third citation. We cannot remember having existed before the body, for there can be no traces of it in the body, and eternity is not time; *still, we feel that we are eternal, i. e., that we really did exist before the body.*

Again, in speaking of the eternity of the intellectual love of God, which springs from the possession of adequate ideas, Spinoza writes:

"Although this love toward God has not had a beginning, nevertheless it has all the perfections of love, just as if it had had a beginning, as we have chosen to assume in the corollary to the preceding proposition. Nor is there here any difference, except that the mind has eternally had these same perfections that we have just conceived of as added to it, and that with the accompanying idea of God as eternal cause. But if pleasure consists in the transition to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in this, that the mind is endowed with perfection itself."<sup>2</sup>

A little before this<sup>3</sup> Spinoza has decided that, although the mind is eternal in so far as it knows things under the form of eternity, it will be convenient to speak of it as though it were just beginning to be, and were just beginning to know things under the form of eternity. This he thinks one may do without

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 23, schol.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 33, schol.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 31, schol.

danger of error provided one be careful to draw no conclusions save from clearly evident premises. He has thus allowed himself a certain latitude in forms of expression, and to this we can take no exception as long as he really does avoid being led into error by it. But in the extract given just above, it is clear that, as the matter presents itself to his mind, the alternative to "having a beginning" is not the purely negative conception "not having a beginning," but the positive conception "having existed in all past time." The mind "has eternally had" these same perfections that we have just conceived of as added to it; blessedness consists in their permanent possession, as contrasted with their acquisition.

This temporal reference comes to the surface of Spinoza's thought again and again. The mind is not subject to the passions "except while the body endures;"<sup>1</sup> blessedness consists in "an unchangeable and eternal love toward God;"<sup>2</sup> the greater the number of things the mind knows adequately, the greater the part of it which "abides;"<sup>3</sup> the human mind can be "of such a nature that the part of it which I have shown to perish with the body is of no importance in comparison with the part of it which remains."<sup>4</sup> The implication of such words as "abide" and "remain" are made, if possible, more explicit by a direct reference to the particular event which Spinoza, in common with other men, desired to have the mind survive: "Since human bodies are capable of very many activities, there is no doubt but that they can be of such a nature as to be related to minds that have a great knowledge of themselves and of God, and of which the greatest or the chief part is eternal—of such a nature, consequently, as scarcely to fear death."<sup>5</sup>

Spinoza himself, it seems to me, begins to realize near the close

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 36, schol.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, V, 38, schol.

<sup>5</sup> Ethics, V, 39, schol.

of Part V that his doctrine of the eternity of the mind comes dangerously near to the ordinary doctrine of immortality. He endeavors to emphasize the difference between the two. This he does, however, not by showing that his eternity does not imply a continuance of existence, but by maintaining that, even were no continuance of existence implied in being in a (Spinozistic) state of salvation, the state is in itself so desirable that it would be the part of imbecility to choose the opposite. The passages to which I refer are so interesting that I shall quote them in full :

“ The first and only foundation of virtue or of a right method of living is to seek one’s own advantage. But in the determination of what reason pronounces to be of advantage, we have taken no account of the eternity of the mind, which we have come to a knowledge of only in this Fifth Part. Hence, although at that time we were ignorant that the mind is eternal, we regarded as of the highest importance those things that, as I have shown, are referred to courage and magnanimity. Therefore, were we even now ignorant of that fact, we should nevertheless regard as of the highest importance these precepts of reason.

“ The belief of the multitude appears to be otherwise. Most men seem to think that they are free just in so far as they are permitted to gratify desire, and that they give up their independence just in so far as they are obliged to live according to the precept of the divine law. Piety, then, and religion, and all things, without restriction, that are referred to greatness of soul, they regard as burdens ; and they hope after death to lay these down and to receive the reward of their bondage, that is, of piety and religion. And not by this hope alone, but also and chiefly by fear—the fear of being punished after death with dire torments —are they induced to live according to the precept of the divine law so far as their poverty and feebleness of soul permit. If men had not this hope and fear, but if, on the contrary, they thought that minds perished with the body, and that for the

wretched, worn out with the burden of piety, there was no continuation of existence, they would return to their inclination, and decide to regulate everything according to their lusts, and to be governed by chance rather than by themselves. This seems to me no less absurd than it would seem if someone, because he does not believe he can nourish his body with good food to eternity, should choose to stuff himself with what is poisonous and deadly; or, because he sees that his mind is not eternal or immortal, should choose on that account to be mad, and to live without reason. These things are so absurd as scarcely to be worth mentioning."<sup>1</sup>

To my mind these passages clearly indicate that Spinoza's eternity obtains its significance *as eternity* from its temporal suggestions. At the same time they plainly indicate that the word brought habitually before Spinoza's mind more than a *mere* continuance of existence. This no careful student of his writings would, I think, care to deny. The thought of a life after death no better than the present life, and of substantially the same character, filled him with disgust. The eternal part of the mind, as he conceived it, took its place in the world of essences and partook of an existence of a purer and higher kind than that allotted to the perishable things of this world. This idealization of the essence is in accordance with the ancient tradition; it is Platonic, Neo-Platonic, Scholastic. The word eternity, which had been used to describe this higher and purer existence, came to Spinoza rich with associations, and with a connotation but imperfectly grasped. But whatever the associations which have come to cluster about the word, and whatever other qualities we may attribute to the objects to which we habitually apply it, the word itself really signifies an unlimited continuance in existence. Sometimes it has been used with but a dim consciousness of its proper meaning, and with a preponderating consciousness of the associations to which I have

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 41 and schol.

alluded. But it always means, when it really means anything, a continuance in existence. It means this vaguely, even to writers like Spinoza, who deny in words that it has any temporal connotation whatever. In such cases one can get at the true meaning by an examination into the writer's reasons for using the word "eternal," rather than some other word, to describe the object of which he is speaking.

I shall end what I have to say about Spinoza's treatment of time and eternity by quoting once more from the "Ethics." The words with which Spinoza brings his volume to a close need no comment. I shall merely underline a few words to which I ask the reader's attention.

"With this I have completed all that I intended to show regarding the power of the mind over the emotions, and the freedom of the mind. From what I have said it is evident how much stronger and better the wise man is than the ignorant man, who is led by mere desire. For the ignorant man, besides being agitated in many ways by external causes, and never attaining true satisfaction of soul, lives as it were without consciousness of himself, of God, and of things, and *just as soon as he ceases to be acted upon, ceases to be*. While, on the contrary, the wise man, in so far as he is considered as such, is little disturbed in mind, but conscious by a certain *eternal* necessity of himself, of God, and of things, he *never ceases to be*, but is *always* possessed of true satisfaction of soul. If, indeed, the path that I have shown to lead to this appears very difficult, still it may be found. And surely it must be difficult, since it is so rarely found. For if salvation were easily attained, and could be found without great labor, how could it be neglected by nearly everyone? But all excellent things are as difficult as they are rare."

§ 21. *Time and Eternity; St. Augustine.*—It would be easy to show by citations from the works of a multitude of authors selected from widely different times, that Spinoza's treatment of time and eternity is in the direct line of a very influential tradition,

and is in no sense a new or surprising phenomenon. Eternity is to be regarded as something different from time, and free from its successive character. It is a fixed and frozen, not a flowing stream. But a little attention to the passages in which it is discussed reveals the fact that it is not really fixed, and that its apparent immobility is but a delusion. Indeed, I cannot remember ever to have met in the course of my reading a single instance in which an advocate of a timeless eternity succeeded in keeping it really timeless. One is almost tempted to say that no very serious effort to keep it timeless appears to be made. It seems to be regarded as sufficient to assert that it is timeless and then to go on talking as though it were not.

It is no part of my present purpose to enter into a general historical survey of the use which philosophers and theologians have made of the word "eternal." But in order to illustrate the truth of the statement that Spinoza, both in what he attempts and in what he fails to do, is really one of a class, I shall give a single example. I choose Augustine, a man of genius, a thinker permeated by the Platonic spirit, and a Father of the Church, whose writings had no small influence in moulding the opinions of philosophers in the generations which succeeded him. A few citations from one or two of his chief works will suffice, although he offers an unlimited supply of material for illustration.

There is a striking passage in the "De Trinitate" in which Augustine draws a distinction between knowledge and wisdom. The former has to do with things temporal, the latter with things eternal. Having indicated what he means to include in the former class, Augustine continues as follows :

"When, therefore, a discourse has to do with these things, I call it a discourse which is concerned with knowledge, and distinguish it from a discourse which has to do with wisdom, to which latter belong those things which neither have been, nor shall be, but are; and which, on account of that eternity in which they are, are said to have been, to be, and to be about to be,

without any changeableness of times. For they have not been in such a way as to cease to be, nor are they about to be in such a way as not now to have their being ; but they always have had and always will have the very same being. And they abide, not as though fixed, like bodies, in definite places ; but just as visible or tangible things in space are present to the bodily senses, so intelligible things in incorporeal nature are present to the eye of the mind. Moreover, it is not only of sensible things having position in space that there abide intelligible and incorporeal reasons without position in space ; even of motions, which pass in time, there likewise exist reasons that do not pass in time, and which are intelligible, not sensible. To attain to these with the eye of the mind is the lot of but few ; and he who does attain to them, as far as he may, does not abide in their contemplation, but is driven back by a rebound, as it were, of the sight itself, and there thus arises a transitory thought of a thing not transitory. And yet this transitory thought is by instruction, which trains the mind, committed to the memory, that the mind, which is forced to pass from it, may again return to it : although, if thought did not return to the memory, and find in it what had been committed to it, it would be led to the same like an ignorant person, as it had been led before, and would find it, where it had found it in the first instance, in the incorporeal truth itself, whence it would again take a copy, as it were, and fix it in the memory. For, to take an example, the thought of man does not abide in the incorporeal and unchangeable reason of a square body, as that reason in itself abides ; if, indeed, his thought has been able to rise to it at all without the notion of space. Again, if one conceive the rhythm of some ingenious and musical sound which passes away in spaces of time, as it exists without time in some secret and profound silence, one can at least think of it as long as that song can be heard ; but that which the glance of the mind, although fleeting, has thence carried away, and, as if swallowing down into the belly, has laid up in the memory, it will

be possible to ruminate, as it were, in recollection and to carry over to science what has thus been learned. But if it has been blotted out by complete forgetfulness, the mind, with the help of instruction, will come again to that which it had wholly lost, and it will be found to be just what it was."<sup>1</sup>

It needs but little discernment to see in these eternal reasons of things fleeting and temporal the Platonic Ideas and the "fixed and eternal things" of Spinoza. In the writings of Augustine their assumption appears to have less justification than it has in the works of those who have more clearly recognized their universal character. Still, they are the Platonic Ideas, and Augustine took them directly from the Platonists. They are known by the intellect and not by the sense; they are changeless and imperishable; and a knowledge of them is to be preferred to a knowledge of things temporal.<sup>2</sup> They are free from the vicissitudes of time—they "neither have been, nor shall be, but are"—and enjoy an eternity "without any changeableness of times."<sup>3</sup>

This timelessness of the eternal reasons of things is emphasized in many other passages. For example, in the "De Civitate Dei," we are told that God in His own nature speaks "not corporeally, but spiritually; not to the sense, but to the intellect; not temporally, but, so to speak, eternally; without making a beginning, and without coming to an end."<sup>4</sup> Time, we are informed, "since it passes away by its changeableness, cannot be coeternal with unchangeable eternity."<sup>5</sup> There can be no time unless there exist some creature which by its movements makes time possible, for time implies change. Not so, eternity.

Thus does Augustine attempt to sunder time and eternity.

<sup>1</sup> *De Trinitate*, XII, 23. *Opera*, Tom. VIII, Paris, 1688.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 25.

<sup>3</sup> "Quae nec erunt, nec futura sunt, sed sunt;" "sine ulla mutabilitate temporum."

<sup>4</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, X, 15, *Opera*, Tom. VII, Antwerp, 1700.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 15. "Tempus autem quoniam mutabilitate transcurrit, aeternitati immutabili non potest esse coeternum."

But an examination of the very passages in which he does this reveals that he cannot really separate them. Were he completely to deprive eternity of its temporal content, its meaning would vanish. Hence he is compelled to make use of words which express time-relations, while insisting that there is in eternity no succession. Eternal things, "on account of that eternity in which they are, are said to have been, to be, and to be about to be, without any changeableness of times. For they have not been in such a way as to cease to be, nor are they about to be in such a way as not now to have their being; but they always have had and always will have the very same being."

These eternal things are clearly things which exist in all times, however half-hearted the terms in which a temporal existence is attributed to them. One may inconsistently deny of them whatever change may be implied in past, present and future existence; but unless one use some such expressions as, "they are," "they always have have had," "they always will have," one leaves wholly undescribed that "very same being" of which Augustine wishes to treat. One cannot express such thoughts by a consistent use of infinitives.

Everywhere in Augustine's writings do we find this surreptitious introduction of a temporal content into eternity. There can be no question as to the significance of such expressions as the following: "For if something in it, which was not from eternity, began to be in time, why could not it itself have a beginning in time, although nonexistent before;"<sup>1</sup> "And thus they will have to confess that there happens to it some new thing, and that a great and important thing, which never in a whole past eternity happened to it before;"<sup>2</sup> "For if eternity and time are rightly distinguished by the fact that time cannot exist without the change implied in motion, while in eternity there is no

<sup>1</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, X, 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 4:—"quod numquam retro per aeternitatem accidisset."

change ; who does not see that times would not have existed, had there not been a creature to make some change by movement, from which movement (since its parts, as they cannot be simultaneous, give place to and follow one another,) time took its rise in shorter or longer periods of duration ? As, therefore, God, in whose eternity there is absolutely no change, is the creator and ordainer of times, I do not see how it can be said that the world was created after a space of time, unless it be said that before the world there already existed some creature, from whose motions time took its rise.<sup>1</sup>

In answering the objections made, on the score of its recent occurrence, to the creation of man, as described in the Scriptures, Augustine writes as follows : " If the shortness of the time offends them, because the number of years which have elapsed since the creation of man, according to our authorities, seem to them so few ; let them reflect that nothing, which has an end, is long, and that every finite period of time, compared with the boundless eternity, is to be regarded, not merely as brief, but as nothing."<sup>2</sup> The " past eternity, without a beginning, during which God abstained from the creation of man,"<sup>3</sup> is so great, that no finite time can be compared with it.

So unequivocal are Augustine's words that it hardly seems necessary to multiply citations, but I am tempted to give just a few more : in the Divine eternity " that which was to be in its own time was already predestined and fixed ;"<sup>4</sup> God " abode from a boundless eternity, without creatures, in a blessedness no less perfect ;"<sup>5</sup> " the first human beings were so constituted, that had they not sinned, they would not have been loosed from their bodies by death, but, endowed with immortality as a reward

<sup>1</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, *Ibid.*, XI, 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* : " *Dei quippe ab hominis creatione cessatio retrorsus æterna sine initio tanta est*," etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 17.

for having preserved their obedience, they would have lived on to eternity with their bodies.”<sup>1</sup>

Occasionally Augustine recognizes in so many words that by eternity he really means nothing more nor less than endless time, although, as a rule, he does not see this: “For no life, however long, can truly be called eternal, if it is to have an end. It is called life because it is living, but it is called eternal because it has no end.”<sup>2</sup> But this is, as I have said, exceptional. Now and then one finds a passage which departs from the way of speaking to which one grows accustomed in reading the “*De Civitate Dei*” in still another way. For example, in arguing against the doctrine of metempsychosis, with its recurring cycles of deliverance from and incarceration in the body, Augustine declares it to be an unendurable thought that one who has attained to the contemplation of spiritual light and participation in God’s unchangeable immortality, should be “cast down from that eternity, truth and felicity” and again entangled in “infernal mortality, shameful foolishness, and accursed miseries.”<sup>3</sup> Here the contrast does not appear to be between an endless and a finite continuance in existence, but rather between a secure and blessed life and a life subject to vicissitudes. It should be remembered, however, that unchangeableness was a very important element in Augustine’s notion of eternity. It was a troublesome element, to be sure, for no more unhappy task can be imagined than the attempt to unite in one conception an unchangeableness which excludes the possibility of past, present and future, and the unlimited continuance in existence which gives its proper meaning to the word eternity. What measure of success Augustine had in uniting them we have seen. Still, both ideas were present and quarreled in the womb of his thought, and in the sentence I am criticising the idea of unchangeableness had the

<sup>1</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, XIII, 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 11; see also XXII, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 20.

upper hand. But even there the other idea makes its presence felt, for without the notion of continuance in existence, God's "unchangeable immortality" becomes an empty phrase.

§ 22. *Time and Eternity; the Truth and Its Expression.*—At the opening of the Fifth Book of the "De Trinitate," Augustine apologizes for the inadequacy both of thought and of speech when they have to do with divine things. He begs his reader to pardon him if it is evident that he has had rather the wish than the power to speak; and he promises in his turn to be indulgent if the obstacle to a comprehension of his language arises from stupidity on the part of the reader himself.

"We shall the more easily pardon each other," he writes, "if we know, or at least firmly believe, that what is said of a nature unchangeable, invisible, in the highest degree endowed with life, and self-sufficient, is not to be measured after the fashion of things visible and changeable and mortal or not sufficient to themselves. But though we labor unsuccessfully to attain to a knowledge even of those things which fall within the province of our bodily senses, or of that thing which we ourselves are in the inner man; yet it is not through shamelessness that a faithful piety burns to attain to the things above, which are divine and ineffable—a piety not puffed up with excessive confidence in its own powers, but kindled by the grace of the Creator and Saviour Himself. For how can man comprehend God by his intellect, when he does not so much as comprehend that same intellect of his by which he would comprehend Him? But if he does succeed in grasping this latter, let him mark the fact that there is in his nature nothing better, and let him see whether he can there discern any outlined forms, shining colors, spatial extension, diversity of parts, swelling bulk, motions in space, or anything else of the sort. Surely none of these do we find in that, than which in our nature we find nothing better, to wit, in our intellect, by which we apprehend wisdom, as far as our powers permit. Therefore, what we do not find in the better part of

ourselves, we should not seek in Him who is far better than our best ; and thus we should apprehend God, if we can, and as far as we can, as good without quality, great without quantity, a creator though lacking nothing, controlling things, but without spatial position, containing all things without being qualified or determined, in no place and yet everywhere present in His totality, eternal without time, making things that are changeable without any change in Himself, and passive in no respect. Who thus thinks of God, although he does not wholly discover what He is, at least takes pious care, as far as he can, not to think Him anything that He is not.”<sup>1</sup>

Such being the difficulties of the subject and such the limitations to our comprehension set by human infirmity, Augustine thinks a writer can hardly be regarded as remiss who has, it is true, failed to express clearly and in unambiguous language the meaning he wished to convey, but who has at least succeeded in expressing its drift. This position seems reasonable. It is better to see through a glass, darkly, than not to see at all ; and if, in treating of an obscure matter, one can throw even a ray of light upon it by betaking oneself to the use of metaphorical or figurative speech, no reasonable man can object to such a mode of procedure. Thus Augustine discourses at great length upon the divine nature, while admitting the inadequacy of the language he uses to do justice to its perfections. His words are to be taken, like the Platonic myth, as rather an adumbration, than an expression, of the truth.

We have seen that Spinoza, in treating of the eternity of the mind, assumes, for convenience, the right to speak as though it had had a beginning in time. He recognizes that there is a possible danger in thus speaking, but thinks it possible to escape it, “provided we are careful to draw no conclusions except from

<sup>1</sup> *De Trin.*, V, 2. Augustine doubts whether the mouth of man can say anything of God otherwise than metaphorically and figuratively : “si tamen de illo proprie aliquid dici ore hominis potest.”—*Ibid.*, V, 11.

premises that are clearly evident." I have already touched upon the latitude of expression that Spinoza thus allows himself, and indicated that he did not succeed in avoiding an inconsistency not merely of expression but of thought. But here I wish to take the matter up again in a somewhat broader way, and inquire briefly whether, in view of the nature of the subject and the inadequacy of human speech, Augustine and Spinoza and the many other thinkers who have distinguished between time and eternity, and have yet employed, in speaking about the latter, terms which certainly have a temporal connotation, have been justified in thus speaking; whether, in other words, one may not, by accepting their statements in a certain loose and generous way, and overlooking the contradictions which present themselves to a too exact scrutiny, gain a certain vague idea of an eternity which is really timeless, and yet is at least suggested by the use of words that properly indicate time-relations. Certainly every thought, and even every valuable thought, is not a clear thought; and the use of analogy may bring before our minds in a certain indefinite way many things that cannot, for some reason, be distinctly represented in an analytical consciousness.

Much of our knowledge of sufficiently common things is vague and indefinite, a knowledge rather of types and representatives than of the things themselves. When, for example, we follow in the pages of a realistic novel the description of a luxuriant garden, the names of the various plants mentioned are, to most of us, in large part unknown. Were we to enter the garden in person, we could probably, even after reading the description, identify but few. And yet it does not follow that, because the names mentioned are unfamiliar, we gain nothing at all from the description. We follow it with interest, filling out the new names presented by the author with a meaning derived from our own past experience of garden plants, a meaning vague, indefinite, incomplete, but still on the whole sufficient to enable us to gain the general impression which will make that garden to us the proper setting

for the tender passages between lovers of which it is to be the scene. If I have never in my life seen rosemary and rue, the mention of their names does not necessarily leave my mind a blank. I may know that they are plants, not animals; and even that they are plants of one class rather than another. And when I ask the meaning of a German word, and am informed that it signifies a creature not unlike a robin, I am, if my information be correct and my imagination trustworthy, in a position to bring before my mind a partially correct idea, at least, of the bird which I have never seen. My knowledge may be incomplete, but the thing does not remain wholly unknown to me. I know it through its representative.

So it is in every department of our knowledge. Things resemble each other and stand for each other, so that through the one the other may in a measure be known. But it should never be forgotten that things cannot possibly stand for each other except in so far as they really have some resemblance. A representative must really represent, or it is no true representative. This is a truth so often overlooked that it is worth while to emphasize it. In the description of the garden, if it has been the chief aim of the novelist to call up before the mind of the reader something which has no analogy in all my past experience, then, so far as I am concerned, he has piped to the deaf. And if I cannot tell an American robin from a ploughed field, the creature that "resembles a robin" is to me a mere sound. To represent each other things must resemble each other, and resemblance means partial identity. The identity may lie, not in some element in the things themselves, but in some relation in which they stand, or in some function that they serve.<sup>1</sup> But whatever the element in which the identity lies, it is by virtue of this that things can stand as each other's representatives, and not by virtue of those elements in which they differ.

Thus, we may use a short line to represent a long one, if we

<sup>1</sup> See my monograph "On Sameness and Identity," p. 55.

are interested in the bisection of a line; an isosceles triangle to represent an equilateral, if we are concerned only with those properties common to both. But we cannot use a point to represent a line, if we define a point as without extension, and are desirous of treating a line as composed of parts; nor can we, by the use of an isosceles triangle, illustrate a property belonging to an equilateral only in so far as it is such. The square and the circle are both geometrical figures, and in so far can represent each other, but they cannot represent each other in those things in which they differ.

Hence, although it is quite legitimate to use things not wholly alike as representatives of each other in seeking an extension of human knowledge, it must not be forgotten that the limits of what is legitimate may be exceeded. It is perfectly proper for one who has observed that in the scale of living creatures there is a certain progressive evolution of sense and intellect, to assume the possibility of a further progress, and to believe that the future may give birth to developments much beyond anything that can be found in the present. It is not meaningless to speak of senses to us unknown, or to hold that an intellect above the human may know things in ways of which we can form no clear conception. But the reason why it is not meaningless to speak thus, is that in so doing we are making use of elements drawn from experience to give significance to our statements. We have some notion of what we mean when we use such words as "sense," "higher" and "difference." There is a positive content to our thought. But if for any reason we abstract this positive content, if we suppress our representative, our thought lapses. An unknown sense cannot be thought even vaguely if we blot out of our minds the meaning of the word sense.

Now when Augustine and Spinoza attempt to give us information about eternity, which they maintain to be timeless, they constantly use, as we have seen, language that properly expresses time-relations and nothing else. They make time, in

a sense, a representative of eternity, while asserting that there is between them an important difference. According to what has been said above, time may be made to stand for anything with which it has any common element, and for nothing with which it has not. But the one thing that makes time time, its successiveness, its consisting of past, present and future, these writers, in common with many others, deny of eternity. Time cannot, then, represent eternity by virtue of its successiveness. But if this notion be abstracted from time, what remains? With the disappearance of the notion of succession time simply vanishes, and all words used to indicate time-relations become mere sounds. Hence it must surely be irrelevant to use such expressions as "always has been," "always will be," and the like, in describing any eternal (timeless) thing. They cannot even vaguely suggest the meaning we wish to convey, for every suggestion to which they give rise must be wholly misleading. It is a strange way of describing anything to use only words which directly contradict the character we wish to ascribe to it, if we allow those words to have any meaning at all, and which must be emptied of all sense if we wish to avoid inconsistency! Were time a composite, including within itself an element of succession and some other element of a different kind, then some other thing—eternity, if you like—might resemble time in the one element and not in the other. It could then be described as *something like time*, though without a past, present or future. But even then it would be illegitimate and gratuitously misleading to make use, in speaking of it, of those expressions which serve only to indicate some aspect of the successive character of time. It would be wrong to describe it as "abiding" or "enduring" or "remaining." If eternity is really to be thought as having nothing to do with continuance in existence, it would be less perplexing, and quite as much to the point, to describe it as red or yellow or blue.

It is, therefore, impossible to justify the language used by

Augustine and Spinoza on the ground that, although it fails to describe, it at least serves to shadow forth in some vague way, a timeless eternity. It is evident that the only positive content in their thought is a temporal one. When their thought becomes reasonably clear, this content stands out clearly, and when their thought is vague, this content grows indefinite. As they were not clearly conscious of what their words imply, it was possible for them to deny in one breath that eternity has any relation to time, and in the next to indicate unmistakably that it has.

That their statements were inconsistent, I cannot regard as remarkable, for they had a serious difficulty to contend with, a difficulty which has been a stone of stumbling from Plato to Spinoza, and from Spinoza even to our day. He who fails to discriminate between the timeless eternity of the universal, a spurious eternity which should never have received the name, and the eternity of common thought and speech, which means endless time—he who fails to discriminate between these two things, has chosen the straight path to logical disaster. The universal is perceived to be independent of time, and unhappily called eternal. It is contrasted with the individual things of sense, which are subject to generation and decay, and it becomes the pattern and type of the unchangeable. It comes to be believed that nothing can be truly unchangeable, unless it be similarly free from time-relations. The soul then, that turns with a religious longing to find for itself something fixed and unchangeable, above the chances and changes of this mortal life,<sup>1</sup> conceives that it must seek it where there obtain no such distinctions as past, present and future.

In discussing, earlier in this monograph,<sup>2</sup> the eternity of essences, I have pointed out the nature of the blunder here com-

<sup>1</sup> "Sed amor erga rem aeternam et infinitam sola laetitia pascit animum, ipsaque omnis tristitia est expers; quod valde est desiderandum, totisque viribus quaerendum."—De Int. Emendat., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See § 18.

mitted. To call a universal unchangeable is inadmissible. It is as misleading as it would be to call a stone unhappy. To call a thing unchangeable is not simply to deny that it is subject to change. In speaking thus one implies that the thing in question remains unchanged. It takes time either to change or to remain unchanged ; and nothing without relation to time can do either. Hence, when we speak of an unchangeable thing as out of all relation to time, we are guilty of a contradiction at once. We have already confounded the timelessness of the essence with the temporal eternity which is the real object of our solicitude, and have with the use of the adjective "unchangeable" abandoned the former conception for the latter. All that we say afterwards by way of making more apparent the nature of that changeless eternity which we insist to be timeless only results in bringing out more clearly that it has no other than a temporal content.

§ 23. *Time and Eternity: the Eternity of Mathematical Relations.*—Before leaving the subject discussed in the last few sections, I feel that I must say at least a few words touching a class of illustrations often adduced with a view of making clear what is meant by a timeless eternity. These illustrations are drawn from the mathematics. The reader of Spinoza will recall to mind that in the "Ethics" that adequate knowledge of things which it is the aim of all our endeavors to attain, the knowledge which grasps things out of temporal relations, and as eternally contained in the essence of God, is compared with the perception of mathematical relations, with, in a concrete instance, the knowledge of the number 6 as the fourth proportional to the numbers 1, 2, and 3.<sup>3</sup>

Mathematical truths, we are often told, are eternal and independent of time. Hence, if we conceive the relation between a Spinozistic attribute and a particular adequate idea which falls under it as analogous to that between the plane triangle and the property of having its three internal angles equal to two right angles,

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, II, 40, schol. 2, and V, 29, schol. Cf. II, 8, schol.

we are conceiving that relation as an eternal truth and as timeless. The triangle does not chronologically precede its several properties ; nor are we, in studying them, concerned with individual facts, but with universal relations which have nothing to do with time or circumstance.

Of the deduction of individual things from the divine attributes I have spoken sufficiently at length, and it is not necessary for me to say more here. The distinction, too, between a logical and a chronological relation is one not difficult to grasp, and I shall not dwell upon it. But since the nature of mathematical relations seems to many minds to furnish a satisfactory illustration of a timelessly eternal existence, it is worth while to consider a little more narrowly what their eternity really signifies. The subject will not delay us long, for it has already been discussed in connection with the eternity of the universal, of which, indeed, this is but an aspect.

Here, as before, it is important to distinguish between the concrete and the abstract, the individual and the universal. A given plane triangle is an individual thing. Here it lies upon my paper. It has three individual internal angles, which together are equal to two right angles. As long as this triangle exists unchanged, these three angles will exist, and will remain just as large as they are, separately or together. When the triangle ceases to exist, its three angles will cease to exist, too ; and their size will vanish with them. They will not then be together equal to two right angles, for they will not be equal to or different from anything whatever. To stand in such relations a thing must have some sort of existence. Nothing-at-all cannot stand in relations.

But in making assertions regarding the triangle, we may have in mind, not the individual, but the universal. Just as we overlook the differences of individual men, and form the class-notion man, so we may abstract from the differences of individual triangles, and form a notion which embraces only something

common to them all. In the mathematics we are primarily occupied with such class-notions, and only incidentally with any particular individual. We may, accordingly, in enunciating the truth that the three internal angles of the plane triangle are equal to two right angles, have in mind no particular triangle at all. We have noticed that the property under discussion is independent of the differences which distinguish triangles from each other, and may be proved in such a general way that it is seen to be related only to those things which triangles have in common. Hence, we think of this property as common to all plane triangles, and independent of space and time in exactly the same sense in which anything included in the general notion of a triangle, which we have formed, is independent of space and time.

It is not uncommon to speak of mathematical relations thus generalized as eternal truths. The phrase should not be allowed to mislead us.

If we merely mean that—to keep to the case we have been discussing—every plane triangle, whether real or imaginary, past, present or future, has had, has or will have the property in question; if we mean this and no more, we have not fallen into error. The word eternal, here used to indicate a certain indirect relation of the universal to all time, through its numberless possible “occurrences,” is not without significance. But it must be borne in mind that this eternity belongs to the “occurrences” in the aggregate, not to any one of them, and not to the universal as an abstraction. It is an eternity in no sense timeless. Any one of the “occurrences” is an individual, and every element and aspect of it is individual. As I have indicated above, when it ceases to exist, every relation of which it is the subject ceases to exist, too. As we are not in the habit of distinguishing between “occurrences” of relations, we are very apt to overlook this fact.

And as to the universal in itself considered, I have shown

that its eternity is a thing but little impressive or interesting when properly understood. It consists wholly in a freedom from individualizing elements, in the negative virtue of not appearing in "occurrences," but remaining abstract. It is, hence, timeless, but insignificant. If, then, when we state that a given property of the triangle is an eternal truth, we really have no reference to any individual triangles of any sort, our statement is a very empty one. We have no right in this case to think of the triangle as *always* having this property. No notion of permanence, of unchangeableness, of continuance in existence must be allowed to creep in and surreptitiously fill the void. We must not say that *the triangle would continue* to have this property even if every actual triangle were annihilated, as those do who turn mathematical abstractions into concrete and existing things, after the fashion of the mediæval realist. In short, it appears that it is wiser to be silent than to speak at all, since everything we permit ourselves to say turns out to be big with self-contradiction. And yet, it is hard not to speak. By the use of the word eternal we have created a vacuum, abhorrent to nature, and yawning for a content.

It is evident, therefore, that mathematical relations, properly understood, furnish no better illustration of a timeless eternity than can be gathered from other fields. The reason why they appear satisfactory is that those who turn to them do not really want a timeless eternity. What they want, as is clear from their writings, is an eternity vaguely temporal. Since mathematical relations appear to have a certain enduring relation to all time through the numberless "occurrences" in which they are exemplified; and since, furthermore, it is not clearly recognized that two instances of a given mathematical relation are really two "occurrences," similar but not identical, the same only in a somewhat loose sense of the word; since, I say, these are the conditions which present themselves, it is easy to understand how one may, by making use of an illustration from the mathematics,

gain a cloudy sense of having grasped a something enduring and yet above temporal distinctions. Universal and individual have been confused, and the indefinite result is vaguely contradictory and vaguely temporal.

§ 24. *The Spinozistic Immortality and the Parallelism of Modes.*

—In the first part of this monograph I have given a sketch of Spinoza's doctrine of the parallelism of modes in the two attributes thought and extension. I have there mentioned that he is not always true to his own doctrine. For the convenience of the reader, and that what I now wish to say may be the clearer, I shall here quote the sentences in which I summarized and commented upon his views as to the two worlds of existing things.<sup>1</sup>

“The corporeal world consists of a limitless congeries of finite individual things, causally related to each other. All changes which take place in it are the result of previous changes in the same world. Nowhere is there any contact with any other sphere of being. Human bodies are highly complex bits of mechanism, and are influenced only by physical causes.

“The world of mind is, so to speak, a copy of the corporeal world. It is composed of finite, particular ideas. Each thing in the corporeal world has its corresponding idea in the world of thought, and the complexity of the thing is reflected in its idea. The place of any idea in the world of thought corresponds precisely to the place of its object in the world of things. This correspondence must be absolute and without exception, for an idea and its object are one and the same thing considered under two aspects. Like things, ideas are related only to other individuals in their own world. There is no contact between this sphere of being and any other.

“The human mind is the idea of the human body, and exactly represents it. It is composed of as many ideas as the body is of parts, and the correspondence of idea to its object is carried out in every detail. The mind must not be regarded as a

<sup>1</sup> § 7.

mysterious subject, which *has* ideas: one cannot speak of it as *having* ideas; it *is* ideas. To Descartes the mind was still a subject having attributes; to Spinoza it is a group of ideas, as to Hume it is a 'bundle of perceptions.' And there can be no change in the ideas composing the mind except as it is brought about by previous changes in the world of ideas. Spinoza's human being is the modern physical automaton with parallel psychical states; but ideal justice is done to the psychical states. They do not follow the body, like a shadow. They are equally independent, and play an equally important part as actors or sufferers in as complete and independent a world.

"Such is the Spinozistic parallelism of ideas and corporeal things. To be sure, Spinoza is not always true to his own doctrine. It cannot be denied that in Part II of the 'Ethics' he unconsciously gives the precedence to bodies, as in Part V he gives the precedence to minds. It must be admitted that he is untrue to it in his recognition of a certain correspondence between some ideas and bodies to which they are not the correlates, as also in his recognition of those ghostly ideas of ideas which scarcely show themselves before they melt away again into the ideas they represent. But these inconsistencies form no part of his general doctrine of the (parallelism of ideas and things.) That doctrine is stated clearly and is free from ambiguities. Indeed, so clearly is it set forth, that there seems little excuse for Spinoza's introducing anywhere in his system doctrines inconsistent with it. The inconsistency ought to be apparent."

In the paragraphs to follow I shall not dwell upon the double sense in which Spinoza uses the word idea, and the difficulty of adjusting to the doctrine of the parallelism of modes those ideas in the mind which are to be regarded, not merely as the mental correlates of parts or aspects of the body, but as in some sense representative of things outside of the body. Such ideas are, to be sure, concerned in the Spinozistic doctrine of immortality,

for many adequate ideas are of this character. The man who has worked out his salvation, and who never ceases to be, is "conscious by a certain eternal necessity of himself, of God and of things."<sup>1</sup> But as there is the same difficulty in adjusting such ideas to the doctrine of parallelism whether they are adequate or inadequate, the difficulty does not arise out of this distinction and need not be discussed here. What I wish to discuss is the question of the compatibility or incompatibility of that doctrine with the plan of salvation set forth in Part V of the "Ethics." I shall, accordingly, speak as though Spinoza used the word idea in but one sense, and always meant by it the mental correlates of physical things which constitute their other "aspect."

That in writing Part V Spinoza had not forgotten the parallelism of modes treated in Part II is clear. He informs us at the outset that, "just as the thoughts, and the ideas of things, are arranged and connected in the mind, so, precisely, are the modifications of the body, or the images of things, arranged and connected in the body."<sup>2</sup> In supporting this position reference is made to the previous propositions in which a parallelism of thoughts and things has been so uncompromisingly maintained. And yet the difference in spirit between Part V and Part II comes to the surface in the very next paragraphs. We are told that, "if we separate an agitation of the mind, that is, an emotion, from the thought of its external cause, and join it to other thoughts, both the love or hate toward the external cause, and the agitations of the soul that arise from these emotions will be destroyed;" that, "an emotion that is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it;" and that, "there is no modification of the body of which we cannot form a clear and distinct conception."<sup>3</sup>

Such statements at once give rise to certain questions. Is there, in the first instance, corresponding to the separation of the emotion from the thought of its external cause, a parallel separa-

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 42, schol.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 2, 3 and 4.

tion of the bodily modification from its physical cause? And in the second, since an emotion ceases to be a passion when it becomes a clear idea, that is, ceases to be subject to transient causes and has a place only in the chain of those which are eternal; does the corresponding bodily modification also drop out of its relation to other existences and owe its being directly to the attribute under which it stands? Again, if there be no modification of the body which we cannot conceive adequately, does not the doctrine of parallelism plainly demand that there be no modification of the body which may not cease to belong to the interconnected system of existing corporeal things?

To these questions Spinoza furnishes no definite answer. He passes over the whole matter in silence, so absorbed, as it seems, in the subject of the eternity of ideas, that the question of a possible eternity of things does not occur to him. That he gives the preference to ideas is scarcely surprising. The immortality of the soul is not only in itself a more absorbing topic than is the immortality of corporeal things, but it is a topic almost forced upon the philosopher by the importance it has held in the history of speculative thought. Upon this subject Spinoza, in view of the influences to which he was subjected and the bent of his own mind, could hardly have been silent. The immortality of corporeal things, however, only a desire for logical consistency could have led him to dwell upon.

The tendency evident in the passages above cited, the tendency to emphasize the mental side of that dual existence—man—and to overlook the corporeal, appears also in other passages. We find that emotions that arise out of or are produced by reason are more powerful than others, and that to them others must accommodate themselves.<sup>1</sup> We perceive here the same silence as to what takes place in the body while these changes are taking place in the world of ideas. And at times the body appears to be, not merely overlooked, but actually subordinated to the mind: “As

<sup>1</sup> *Ethics*, V, 7.

long as we are not harassed by emotions that are contrary to our nature, we have the power of arranging and connecting the modifications of the body according to the intellectual order."<sup>1</sup> The power of rightly concatenating the modifications of the body is thus referred to the mind, as though the mind were not cut off from all possibility of causal efficiency in the material world, but could interfere with its established order, break up existing connections, and bring about connections of a different sort. This is reiterated in the statement: "The mind can bring it to pass that all the modifications of the body, or the images of things, are referred to the idea of God."<sup>2</sup>

We may, perhaps, take the above statement as an answer to the question suggested by the thesis of Proposition 4, which maintains that there is no modification of the body of which we cannot form a clear and distinct conception. It would seem, then, that every modification of the body can really be loosed from its place in the world of existences, and made subject only to immanent causes. What becomes, then, of the orderly and causally related world of things? Has Spinoza not told us that, "no individual thing, that is, nothing that is finite and has determinate existence, can exist or be determined to action, unless it be determined to existence and action by some cause other than itself, which also is finite and has a determinate existence; again, this cause cannot exist nor be determined to action unless it be determined to existence and action by still another, which, too, is finite and has a determinate existence; and so to infinity?"<sup>3</sup> Does this system only exist undisturbed until some mind attains an adequate idea and detaches the bodily modification corresponding to it from the system of corporeal existences? And if it is the mind that brings all this to pass, where is that independence of the mental and physical worlds without which their parallelism cannot exist?

As touching all this, it may be argued that Spinoza has, it is

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ethics, V, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, I, 28.

true, spoken in most of the propositions above cited as though his plan of salvation meditated no more than the rescue of certain ideas from the perishing world of existences, and their transference to the world of essences; that his fragmentary and indefinite references to the world of corporeal things make it natural to infer that everything in it remains fleeting and perishable as before. But it may be maintained, at the same time, that he has spoken thus only because of his excessive interest in the fate of the human mind, and his neglect of its bodily correlate is due to mere oversight. It may be held that his doctrine of the eternity of adequate ideas is not really inconsistent with a doctrine of parallelism. Thus one may affirm that just as ideas may become adequate and pass from the sphere of transient causation to that of immanent, so the corresponding corporeal facts may cease to have a place in the world of time and may take on an eternal and an essential being. In this case the world of existences would no longer, whether on its mental or on its corporeal side, be the complete and well-knit system we have conceived it to be, but at least a parallelism would obtain. To mental existences would correspond corporeal existences, and to adequate and eternal ideas would correspond corporeal things of an independent, imperishable, and eternal character. The modifications of the body referred to the idea of God would be corporeal things of this kind; and the intimation that the mind has anything to do with arranging them would have to be set down to heedlessness.

A loose and indulgent interpretation of Spinoza's language may, perhaps, read some such doctrine into the propositions contained in the first half of Part V; but even there it would not be the natural interpretation of his words. When we come to the utterances contained in the last half of Part V, such an interpretation becomes impossible. There can be but one legitimate explanation of such passages as the following, touching the eternity of the intellectual love of God, which springs from the possession

of adequate ideas: "Hence we may conclude that this love toward God is the most unchangeable of all the emotions, and cannot, in so far as it is referred to the body, be destroyed except with the body itself. What its nature is, in so far as it is referred to the mind alone, we shall see hereafter."<sup>1</sup> The body is to perish, and the intellectual love of God, "in so far as it is referred to the body," must perish with it. There is no mistaking the contrast Spinoza draws between the present and the future life: "This completes all I have to say as regards this present life. . . . Therefore it is now time to pass to the things that pertain to the duration of the mind without relation to the body."<sup>2</sup>

In this connection I might appropriately cite all the passages already referred to as indicating that Spinoza's doctrine of immortality teaches that the mind will continue to exist when the body has been destroyed.<sup>3</sup> Such a repetition is, however, unnecessary. So striking are Spinoza's statements that they must have impressed the reader's mind when met with in the former connection. Nothing short of blindness can maintain that a writer means to treat mind and body in precisely the same way when he is capable of stating that, "the human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains, which is eternal;"<sup>4</sup> or of asserting that the part of the mind which does not abide perishes "with the body."<sup>5</sup> If body and mind are really parallel—the same thing viewed under two aspects—why contrast them in this singular way?

What Spinoza really had in mind can best be understood by remembering what he had inherited from the past. The Aristotelian distinction between the reason, a something in its nature active and independent of the body, and the memory and imagi-

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 20, schol.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 21, 23, 34; 38 and schol.; 39, schol.; 40, schol.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics, V, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Ethics, V, 38, schol.

nation, in their natures passive and intimately related to the bodily organism, had passed over to the philosophy of the Middle Ages and become the subject of universal discussion. Spinoza found the faculties of the mind thus divided. He accepted this distinction, and supported it in his own way, by making adequate ideas, which compose the understanding or reason, directly deducible from the hierarchy of essences and participators in their eternity. In certain propositions in Part V immediately following the one in which he enunciates the Aristotelian doctrine,<sup>1</sup> he does appear to make an attempt to adjust this to his doctrine of parallelism by distinguishing between the essence of the body and its existence, and making the former a something eternal, whose idea belongs to the (eternal) essence of the mind. In other words, he gives a hint of the doctrine set forth above as not wholly incompatible with the first half of Part V. It is, however, but a hint ; and although he afterward refers from time to time to the mind's conceiving of the essence of the body under the form of eternity, it remains with him a mere form of words. Its significance is overlooked ; and, in harmony with the Aristotelian doctrine, the mind is regarded as in part immortal, while the body is looked upon as wholly perishable. Any fair interpretation of his words must, I think, lead one to believe that he attributes to the mind a sort of immortality which he denies to the body, that in this he is following tradition rather than his own teachings as to the relations of thoughts and things, and that what he says in Part V is not in harmony with those teachings. If it be asked, why was he not conscious of his inconsistency ? I ask in turn, why was he not conscious of his inconsistency in making eternity to consist in endless time, while denying to it a "when, before and after ?" It is easier to detect inconsistency some centuries later than it is while the author is giving birth to his thought.

<sup>1</sup> See propositions 21, 22 and 23.

## PART IV.

### THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN SPINOZA.

§ 25. *Introductory.*—The word “religious” is so broad and indefinite in its signification, it is so variously used in the mouths of different speakers, and it is applied to such widely different things, that it seems almost wrong for a writer to use it without giving it an exact definition. One man will refuse to recognize as religious a theologian who whistles on Sunday, and another will apply the word to an adherent of the religion of humanity advocated by Comte. The intelligent student of the history of human thought will not be inclined to restrict its application within very narrow limits; and yet he is compelled to recognize that, unless its signification be in some way limited, the word ceases to have any good reason for existence. Those who declare all human actions to have their root in selfishness rob the word selfishness of its damning content, for they so extend its use that it ceases to mark a distinction and to suggest a contrast.

We cannot, therefore, call all thought and feeling religious without doing violence to an accepted term, which has a meaning, though an indefinite and fluctuating one. The only reasonable question is, what shall we include under the word, and to what shall we refuse to apply it? To this question, notwithstanding what I have said above of the desirability of definition, I do not think that I shall give here a formal answer. I shall merely state that I intend to use the word in a broad sense, and to include under it those things that most of my readers, familiar as they are with the history of theological doctrine and philosophical speculation, will on reflection be inclined to include under it. In this sentence I have allowed myself a good deal of latitude, and have also paid a neat compliment to those who may

happen to agree with me. What I wish to exclude will, I hope, become sufficiently evident in the course of the discussion, which will first briefly set forth certain principles of philosophical hermeneutics, and will then occupy itself with the more immediate subject of this monograph, *i. e.*, with Spinoza himself.

One of the first things to bear in mind in forming a judgment regarding the religious character of a writer's thought is that men must not be judged exclusively by their own explicit statements regarding their beliefs, however unambiguous such statements may appear to be. One must not assume that a writer always sees clearly the significance of his own words, or that he follows out their consequences with logical rigor. As I have stated a little above, it is much easier to criticise a system long after it has been promulgated, than it is to form an estimate of its internal consistency and absolute worth while one is producing it. It is quite possible for a writer, even a great writer, a man of genius, and one endowed with both learning and penetration, to hold contradictory beliefs. It is also possible for him to hold beliefs which would not, clearly understood in their full significance, give rise to certain emotions, and yet to feel very deeply those same emotions, which thus hold their place, as it were, through a misconception. As, moreover, every writer has an intellectual and emotional ancestry of some description—since he has not made his appearance upon this earthly stage as some monstrous product of an unaccountable spontaneous generation—he may be expected to appear, not in "utter nakedness," but trailing, for clouds of glory, a somewhat nebulous and often incoherent mass of inherited interpretations of experience, fancies, emotional tendencies, of which he will never be wholly divested. When he feels within himself the impulse to create, he is compelled to use, in constructing the edifice of his thought, stones which have already been built into other shrines, and which carry with them the mysterious influences of the divinities in whose service they have been used before. He cannot utter a sentence

without borrowing from the past. He is a link in a chain. The thoughts of others surround him as an atmosphere, all-embracing, invisible, usually unnoticed, necessary to his very existence.

Since these things are so, we must not try to force upon an author in whom we are interested a consistency of thought and feeling which are not by a fair interpretation to be found in his writings. We must bear in mind the various influences to which he has been subjected. A complete and detailed knowledge of all these influences is, of course, not attainable, nor is it necessary to a reasonably just estimate of the man and his work; but it is difficult to arrive at a sympathetic understanding of a man's thoughts and emotions without knowing at least the main influences that gave them their direction. For inconsistency there is usually some historical justification. To comprehend is here to forgive. This is not equivalent to saying that to comprehend is to forbear criticising. It is a mistaken generosity that leads to indiscriminate and unintelligent admiration. We gain little by living two hundred years after a man's time, if we can accept the thought of his age as uncritically as it is natural for him to accept it.

In this connection I cannot forbear to remark that it is especially important to remember that a man is a product of the past and not of the future. He may be influenced by his predecessors and by his contemporaries, but he can hardly be influenced by generations yet to be. Hence it is grossly unjust to interpret his sentiments in the light of what others have thought fit to believe many years, or perhaps many centuries, after his death. It is contrary to all the canons of good historical criticism to visit the sins of the children upon the fathers in this unnatural fashion. No matter what sort of grapes the children eat, it is a violation of propriety for the fathers' teeth to be set on edge.

This seems so obvious that it may be thought strange that I should care to dwell upon it. And yet it is one of the com-

monest errors to read into an author doctrines which he could not possibly have had in mind, since they were not formulated until long after his time. Such treatment is apt to be euphemistically described as "reading an author sympathetically," "interpreting him in the light of a fuller development of a philosophy which he has but imperfectly apprehended," and the like. This usually means that he must be assumed to be as good an Hegelian as a man can well be who has not actually read Hegel, and that any expressions of his that appear to contradict this notion of him must be quietly overlooked or generously explained away. On the surface this treatment appears generous—more than generous, since it seems to consist in allotting to a man, not merely what is his, but also what belongs to someone else,—but, after all, it robs a man of his own true thought, the thought natural to one living at that particular time and not endowed with prescience.

It is not surprising that one who has embraced a given philosophy, not merely in the sense that he has yielded to it an intellectual assent, but also in the sense that he has found it emotionally satisfying and has devoted himself to it with a certain ardor and enthusiasm—it is, I say, not surprising that such a one should feel a strong desire to find in widely different writers sentiments not at variance with those which have become so dear to his own soul. It is natural to rejoice when we find in another, whose genius has stirred our admiration, an apprehension of the truth which seems in close harmony with our own. But in this attitude of mind there is a distinct danger. One is seeking, not so much truth, as a given truth. One reads rather for edification than with an impartial curiosity. An author read in this spirit is not apt to be found inconsistent, for the eye is open to harmonies, and at least half closed to those things which do not greatly interest the reader.

To this truth, stated thus generally, I suppose no one will take exception. There are too many illustrations of it always before us to make a denial of it possible. All will, perhaps, not see

that it can find no better illustration than that furnished by the treatment which many accord at the present time to the writings of Spinoza. I fancy there is no class of men more strongly drawn to a perusal of these writings than those who have been largely influenced in their thinking, directly or indirectly, by Hegel. Hegel is not to be found in Spinoza, but enough of Spinoza is to be found in Hegel to make the Hegelian feel, in coming in contact with him, that he has found a kindred spirit. It has seemed to me, in examining the modern Spinozistic literature, that the prevailing fault of those who have approached Spinoza from this direction is the inclination to read him for edification, to find in him what they wish to find in him, and to pass rather lightly over many things important to a fair understanding of his whole thought. It seems oddly inconsistent to lay great stress upon the excellence of a text and the accuracy of a translation, and then to read an author in so loose and indulgent a way that a liberal allowance of errors in either can be of no great moment; to tithe the mint and cummin of the sacred text, and yet object to that careful weighing of words and that accurate analysis of sentences without which one cannot possibly understand just what the writer meant to say on this page and on that. Let us read some books for edification, by all means; but let us not forget that in doing so we are rather profiting ourselves than setting an example of good philosophical criticism. Accuracy is unavoidably rather dry, and is rarely stimulating to the emotions. Where it is chiefly desired to awake or maintain enthusiasm, it can hardly be recommended.

However, I must not be supposed to be wholly out of sympathy with the Neo-Hegelian tendency to read as though one were collecting materials for a sermon, and to write as though one imagined oneself in the pulpit. It is positively refreshing, in these days of negative criticism, to find someone with a definite philosophical faith, who believes that it was once delivered to the fathers (does he not daily quarry it out of their works?), and

who is ready to defend it against all comers, with, occasionally, it is true, a trifle of asperity, but at least with earnestness and sincerity. I only enter a warning against the possible dangers that may arise out of such enthusiasm; and I repeat that, in forming a judgment as to the religious character of a writer's thought, we must bear in mind that he is human. We must not measure the whole man by a limited number of direct statements, and overlook passages in which he unconsciously modifies or even contradicts what he has asserted in these; we must not hold him responsible for deductions he did not make, even if the conclusions to which they lead seem ready to start at a touch from premises contained in his writings; we must interpret him in the light of his environment, and of his heritage from the past, not assume him to be gifted with prophetic insight, or inspired by some divinity to utter unconsciously thoughts which belong to a later time.

Thus, when we read the Stoics, we meet with many statements which, taken alone, and interpreted with an unhistorical literalness, might lead us to set the writers down as irreligious and atheistical. We may claim that a god who is no more than fire, or the energy which pervades the material universe, is not a god in any proper sense of that term, and that the contemplation of such a being cannot give rise to true religious emotion. As well argue that a soul that is regarded as mere breath is in no sense a spiritual principle, and that the Stoic with such a notion of the human soul simply overlooked altogether the thinking and feeling mind. One has read the Stoics to little purpose if one is capable of interpreting them in this way. The Divine was not to them mere fire or mere energy, as a modern mind may understand these words. Such a sharpness of discrimination, such a division of material and spiritual, was foreign to their thought and should not be read into it. What they vaguely thought and vaguely felt is abundantly evident from their writings, and the fact that they inadequately described the Divinity they worshiped should not blind us to the fact that

their worship was sincere and their attitude of mind profoundly religious. I do not in the least mean that we are to put into their words a meaning borrowed from some other source and not properly found there. I mean only that we are to take into consideration *all* their words, and to form a just estimate of their whole state of mind. This would not justify us in maintaining that it is a religious view of the system of things to identify God with fire and the soul with a breath ; but it would justify us in upholding that a man may do this and still be religious. The important questions are : What does the man do above and beyond this ? How much more do his words mean to him than they do to us when torn out of their setting ?

Again. When Plotinus teaches us that the last and highest aim of all human endeavor is union with God, the one true Good, who can deny that he seems to be penetrated with a deeply religious sense of the significance of man's life and of its relation to the Divine ? Was not the moment in which, as Porphyry relates, he attained to this union a moment of religious ecstasy ? And yet, what was this highest Good, as he has described it ? The "One," a something which is scarcely a something, so void is it of content, so attenuated, so shadowy ! A verbal shell without substance ; a veil before an empty shrine ; neither thought nor the object of thought ; a cipher. Can religious emotion attach to a mere nothing ? Surely one must see that the religious emotion so apparent in Plotinus did not spring from a reflection upon the abstract unity which his sentences set before us, but from those rich associations which, indistinctly revealed in the background of the picture, give it its meaning and its value. These must be included, by any fair judgment, in his total thought. It is better to tax him with inconsistency than to rob him of most of what belongs to him.

Plotinus reminds us of Augustine, whom I have already had occasion to cite and discuss. What a contrast between Augustine the Christian ecclesiastic and Augustine the Platonizing

theologian! When the latter attempts to purge away from his idea of God all those anthropomorphic suggestions which color the thought and feeling of the former, how much does he leave as a basis of a religious view of the nature of things? When we have succeeded in thinking of God as "good without quality, great without quantity, a creator though lacking nothing, controlling things but without spatial position, containing all things without being qualified or determined, in no place and yet everywhere present in his totality, eternal without time, making things that are changeable without any change in himself, and passive in no respect"—when we have succeeded in thus thinking of him, are we really thinking at all? Augustine himself appears to have some doubt whether we are. When one adds and subtracts with such impartiality, one cannot with confidence look forward to having a row of figures at the bottom of the page. And when we are told that we are to conceive of God as wise, great, good and eternal, but yet in his nature so perfect a unity that his wisdom is his greatness, the latter his goodness, and that, in turn, his eternity, we unavoidably stop thinking altogether. Why should one use adjectives that are intended to express no distinctions? Why continue speaking when language loses all significance?

The student of the history of theological thought is sometimes tempted to believe that the only reason why religion has not, through the efforts of the theologians, perished from the world, is that the teachings of these learned men are not always taken very seriously or laid very much to heart. Imagine the Christian Church really adjusting its thought and feeling to the negative theology of Augustine; accepting literally the contradictions in which he involves himself, drawing the necessary conclusions with logical rigor, and embracing frankly his doctrine of human nescience! The treatment which it actually accorded to him was both more generous and more just. It felt that there were many sides to his thought, and that he was really at heart with the Church. It is clear that when Augustine himself thought of God

he did not think of him as he has told us we should think of him. By the divine goodness, greatness, eternity, and the like, he really meant something, though he often appears to be very vaguely conscious of what he meant. Had he been less complex and more consistent he would have been compelled to modify his statements in the one direction or in the other. Being the ardent and abounding genius that he was, he scattered over his fascinating pages a wealth of material that can only by violence be united into a consistent system. Some things that he has said it would be hard to reconcile with the views of God and of his relation to the world, that have marked the stream of Christian thought through the ages. But he is one of the fathers of the Church nevertheless, and justly holds a high place among those who have left their impress upon its history.

If we turn to a religious philosopher and theologian of a somewhat later date, John Scotus Erigena, the first great scholastic, we find the same inconsistency. When he tells us that God is the beginning and the end of all things ; that in him we live and move and have our being ; that from him we have come and to him we shall return ; he appears to be saying something by no means worthy of the condemnation he met with at the hands of those who were set over him. On the other hand, when we scrutinize either the affirmative or the negative theology he unfolds for us, there seems to be, if we take his words literally, small reason for setting him down as a religious philosopher at all. Whether we deny "being" of the divine essence, or affirm it to be "truth, goodness, essence, light, justice, sun, star, air, water, lion, town, worm, and countless other things," among which, with great impartiality, John Scotus includes drunkenness, foolishness and madness ;<sup>1</sup> in either case there remains slight justification for regarding it with religious emotion. But to do justice to such a writer we must not endow him with a clarity of vision foreign both to his time and his turn of mind. He

<sup>1</sup> *De Divisione Naturæ*, I, 13.

moved in a speculative mist, saw logical abstractions play the part of concrete realities, built up for himself a fantastic world the contradictory foundations of which seemed to him sufficiently secure, and he lived in this world not without spiritual profit and an abiding sense of a nearness to the Divine. We may justly hold that there is little that is religious in the bony structure of his system, if I may be permitted to use so material a metaphor in reference to so airy and unsubstantial a thing ; but we have no right to forget that to him this was clothed upon with much that concealed from the view its true nature and lent to it a more engaging aspect.

This misconception of the full significance of one's own doctrine, and the incorporation into it of discrepant elements, we meet with over and over again in the history of speculative thought. Amalrich of Bena and David of Dinant, kindred spirits to John Seotus, could not have written as they did had they clearly realized that in dealing with universals they were handling abstractions. The mystic Eekhart could not have been the good churchman he appears to have been, had he realized all that is implied in his negative theology. And the philosophers who in modern times have occupied themselves with some form or other of a philosophy of the Absolute constantly allow us to see that they do not intend to make that Absolute as void of all meaning as some of their statements would lead us to suppose. The intelligent reader of the "First Principles" will not be inclined to regard Mr. Spencer as a pure agnostic, but rather as a vague and inconsistent theist ; though, indeed, he is scarcely more vaguely and inconsistently theistic than have been some theologians of eminence in the past. And when Mr. Bradley offers us an Absolute in which all distinctions are supposed to be "transcended," we find this Absolute in some misty way the richer for the elements which it has absorbed. It is absolute, yet not absolutely so ; it still means something, though weakly and vaguely ; it is a vanishing quantity, but it has not wholly vanished.

This truth, namely, that a man's system of doctrine may not adequately express his whole thought, and, indeed, may contain little or nothing to justify his religious views and emotions—this truth is of much importance when one sets oneself to the task of interpreting Spinoza, the child of diverse tendencies, the inheritor of mediæval conceptions, born at a time when new thoughts were struggling to assert themselves in a new and independent fashion. It is easy to attribute to him a false consistency by overlooking certain of his statements. It is easy to fasten upon passages in which he expresses himself in a very unmistakable way, and to maintain that he could not have meant what he has certainly said in other places. But this is not just. It is wiser to take him as he is, and to believe, if that seem to be the most natural interpretation of his words, that he meant different things at different times, and that he is not a complete master of all the conceptions that he is endeavoring to unite into a coherent whole. In the pages to follow I wish to examine briefly his teachings regarding God and Immortality, with a view to seeing whether, when clearly understood, they can justify the religious emotion with which his writings are saturated, or whether this religious emotion is a something derived from an independent source and holding its place in Spinozism through a misunderstanding.

§ 26. *The Spinozistic God.*—One may, perhaps, object at the outset to my trying to distinguish, with what may seem an unnatural clearness, between what properly belongs to Spinozism and what does not. As I have shown in Part II of my monograph, where I have discussed at length the nature of the world of essences, the very being of Spinozism depends upon a certain amount of confusion and inconsistency. The series of “fixed and eternal things,” to play the very important rôle assigned to them in the Spinozistic philosophy, must take on a dual character; they must be both abstract and concrete, capable of a presence in the individual, and yet endowed with an indefinite being which seems in a sense independent of the individual; they

must, in a word, be the inconsistent universals of the realist, neither pure abstractions, nor yet actual things. God or Substance, the highest of this series of essences,<sup>1</sup> must be conceived as a universal, or the notion of *immanence* lapses; but God must also be conceived as something more than an abstraction, or we lose the notion of *immanent causation*, that is, our notion of immanence becomes without significance. Spinoza could not possibly have had a single, distinct, and consistent idea of God, and have employed it in constructing the system which passes under his name. We have seen that, as a matter of fact, he uses the word God in several senses. At times he is much less realistic than at others, and God is little more to him than an abstraction. At such times he perceives rather clearly that the relation of substance to its modes is that of universal to the particulars which should be subsumed under it. Again, his universals are made more concrete, and God, without wholly losing the character of a universal, becomes rather a cause of things than an element in things. Still again, Spinoza becomes so ultra-realistic, that he almost ceases to be a realist. The relation of substance to its modes is then conceived as identical with that of a whole to its parts. He is truest to the needs of his own system, and most in harmony with tradition, when he does not go too far in either direction, but wanders somewhere between the extremes indicated. God is then a universal, and is yet semi-concrete. The concept is an indefinite and fluctuating one, but we evidently have not before us a mere universal clearly recognized to be such. It would, consequently, be unfair to Spinoza to assert that his God is a mere abstraction, and upon this basis alone to pass a judgment upon the religious or irreligious character of the Spinozistic philosophy as a system of doctrine. The conception of God which properly belongs to Spinozism is, as I

<sup>1</sup> I speak here, for convenience, as though Spinoza's essences formed a consistent series ending in one highest member. For a discussion of the relation of substance to attributes, I must refer the reader to § 14.

have said, a vague and indistinct one.<sup>1</sup> One should not attempt to define it too sharply. One should rather ask whether any of the conceptions which fall within the limits above indicated may properly be called religious.

To begin with the conception that forms the lower limit to this series, the conception of God as nothing more nor less than the sum total of existing things. Is this a religious conception? Will it account for what we find in the "De Intellectus Emendatione" or in the "Ethics?"

That a doctrine which identifies God with the sum of things may be—even profoundly—religious, it would be impossible to deny. The primitive fire of Stoicism, which passes into the other elements, precipitates from itself a world, and finally absorbs this world again into itself, is at the same time God and the world. Nor does it seem to the student of either the earlier or the later Stoicism a wholly arbitrary thing that the word God should be used in such a connection and physics and theology thus identified. The world was not a dead thing to the Stoic. It was material, but at the same time spiritual. The system of things appeared to him to be a revelation of reason, to contain plan and purpose. The only reasonable explanation of the order and beauty which he saw about him appeared to him to lie in the assumption of a conscious spirit related to the macrocosm somewhat as the human mind is related to the microcosm. The divine mind is suffused through the world in all its parts, it is a world-soul, and works intelligently in the attainment of rational ends. In adjusting himself to nature, man is not obeying, as a slave, a blind and brute force; he is acquiescing in the designs of a kindred spirit; he rejoices to find himself under the beneficent government of a wise father.

Such a pantheism as this differs in little save the name from theism. Epictetus and Antoninus, in what concerns their ideas of God and his relation to the human soul, have much in common with a long line of Christian saints who might naturally, in

view of some of their utterances, have given them up to a reprobate mind. Augustine is shocked by the Stoic doctrine that God may be regarded as the soul of the world,<sup>1</sup> and thinks it leads to strange conclusions. And yet Augustine and those who have followed him have, in so far as they have developed a positive theology which gives some substantial basis for religious beliefs and emotions, thought of God somewhat after the analogy of the human mind. They speak of him as an intelligence, and they know from experience what it is to be an intelligence of some sort; they talk of his purposes, and they know what it is to have a purpose. They are, in a certain liberal sense of that word, anthropomorphic in their view of God, as were the Stoics, and as are, I am inclined to believe, all who give to the word God a genuinely religious signification.

I have said above that I would use the word religious in a broad sense, and I have been loth to define it. But I think that the history of human thought justifies me in refusing to apply this word to any philosophy, which, while retaining, perhaps, the word God, has divested the corresponding conception of every shred of anthropomorphic reference. Where this element is *wholly* lacking, the word has, it appears to me, so far lost its significance as to become a misleading term for which some other ought to be substituted. It is hardly necessary to point out that the name may be changed when the conception remains at least faintly anthropomorphic, and the fact that it does remain so may be quite overlooked. I regret having to use the somewhat malodorous term anthropomorphic; but I am at a loss for another, and my meaning is, I hope, sufficiently plain.

Now, when Spinoza identified God with the sum total of existing things, how did he regard that total? Did it mean to him, even in a slight degree, what it meant to the Stoic or to the Christian theologian? Let us hear what he says at the close of

<sup>1</sup> The Stoic conception of God was a rather shifting one, as the reader will readily see.

Part I of the "Ethics," which is devoted to an exposition of the nature of God :

"In the foregoing I have unfolded the nature of God and his properties ; as that he exists necessarily ; that he alone is ; that he exists and acts solely from the necessity of his nature ; that he is, and in what way he is, the free cause of all things ; that all things are in God, and so depend upon him that without him they can neither be nor be conceived ; and, finally, that all things have been foreordained by God, not from the freedom of his will or his absolute good-pleasure, but from his absolute nature, or, in other words, his infinite power. Moreover, wherever an opportunity presented itself, I have taken care to remove prejudices which could have prevented the reader from seeing the force of my proofs. As, however, there still remain not a few prejudices which very well could and can prevent men from grasping the connection of things as I have set it forth, I have thought it worth while here to summon these before the bar of reason. Now all the prejudices I here undertake to point out depend on just this one ; that men commonly suppose that all things in nature act, as they themselves do, with a view to some end, nay, even assume that God himself directs all things to some definite end, saying that God has made all things for man, and man that he might worship God. I shall, therefore, consider this prejudice first. I shall inquire, in the *first* place, why most persons assent to it, and all are naturally so prone to embrace it. In the *second* place, I shall prove that it is false ; and, *lastly*, I shall show how there have sprung from it prejudices concerning *good and evil, merit and sin, praise and blame, order and confusion, beauty and ugliness*, and other things of the sort. This is not the place, however, to deduce these things from the nature of the human mind. It will here suffice to assume certain facts all must admit, namely, that all men are born ignorant of the causes of things, and that all men have, and are conscious of having, an impulse to seek their own advan-

tage. From this it follows, *first*, that men think themselves free for the reason that they are conscious of their volitions and desires, and, being ignorant of the causes by which they are led to will and desire, they do not so much as dream of these. It follows, *second*, that men do everything with some purpose in view; that is, with a view to the advantage they seek. Hence it happens that they always desire to know only the final causes of actions, and, when they have learned these, are satisfied. It is because they have no longer any reason to doubt. But if they cannot learn these from someone else, nothing remains for them to do but to turn to themselves and have recourse to the ends by which they are wont to be determined to similar actions; and thus they necessarily judge another's character by their own. Again, since they find in themselves and external to themselves many things, which, as means, are of no small assistance in obtaining what is to their advantage, as, for example, the eyes for seeing, the teeth for chewing, plants and animals for food, the sun for giving light, the sea for maintaining fish, and so on—this has led them to regard all the things in nature as means to their advantage. And knowing that these means have been discovered, not provided, by themselves, they have made this a reason for believing that there is someone else who has provided these means for their use. For after they had come to regard things as means they could not believe that things had made themselves; but from the means which they were wont to provide for themselves they had to infer the existence of some ruler or rulers of nature, endowed with human freedom, who had provided everything for them, and had made all things for their use. Moreover, as they had never had any information concerning the character of such beings, they had to judge of it from their own. Hence they maintained that the gods direct all things with a view to man's advantage, to lay men under obligations to themselves, and to be held by them in the highest honor; whence it has come to pass that each one has thought out for himself,

according to his disposition, a different way of worshiping God, that God might love him above others, and direct all nature to the service of his blind desire and insatiable avarice. Thus this prejudice has become a superstition and has taken deep root in men's minds ; and this has been the reason why every one has applied himself with the greatest effort to comprehend and explain the final causes of all things. But while they sought to prove that nature does nothing uselessly (in other words, nothing that is not to man's advantage), they seem to have proved only that nature and gods and men are all equally mad. Just see how far the thing has been carried. Among all the useful things in nature they could not help finding a few harmful things, as tempests, earthquakes, diseases, and so forth. They maintained that these occur because the gods were angry on account of injuries done them by men, or on account of faults committed in their worship. And although experience daily contradicted this, and showed by an infinity of instances that good and evil fall to the lot of the pious and of the impious indifferently, that did not make them abandon their inveterate prejudice ; they found it easier to class these facts with other unknown things of whose use they were ignorant, and thus to retain their present and innate condition of ignorance, than to destroy the whole fabric of their reasoning and think out a new one. Hence they assume that the judgments of the gods very far surpass man's power of comprehension. This in itself would have been sufficient to hide the truth forever from mankind, had not mathematics, which is concerned, not with final causes, but with the essences and properties of figures, shown men a different standard of truth. Besides the mathematics, other causes can be mentioned (I need not here enumerate them) which might have led men to examine these common prejudices, and have brought them to a true knowledge of things.

" In what precedes I have sufficiently developed my first point. To show that nature has no predetermined end and that all final

causes are only human fancies needs but little argument. For I think this is sufficiently evident, both from the bases and causes, whence, as I have shown, this prejudice has had its origin, and from Proposition 16 and the corollaries to Proposition 32, as also from all those propositions in which I have proved that everything in nature proceeds by a certain eternal necessity, and in the highest perfection.<sup>1</sup> Still, I will add that this doctrine of final causes simply turns nature upside-down. It regards as effect what is really cause, and *vice versa*. In the second place, it makes last what is by nature first. Finally, it renders most imperfect what is supreme and most perfect. For (to omit the first two points as self-evident) that effect, as is plain from Propositions 21, 22, and 23, is the most perfect which is immediately produced by God; and the more intermediate causes are needed for the production of a thing, the more imperfect it is. But if the things immediately produced by God were made in order that God might attain his end, then necessarily the last things, for the sake of which the first were made, would be the most excellent of all. Again, this doctrine denies God's perfection; for if God acts with an end in view, he necessarily seeks something he lacks. And, although theologians and metaphysicians distinguish between the *finis indigentiae* and the *finis assimilationis*, they nevertheless admit that God has done everything for his own sake, and not for that of created things. For, except God himself, they can assign no final cause of God's acting before the creation, and hence are forced to admit that God lacked these things for which he chose to provide means, and desired them, as is self-evident. Nor must I here overlook the fact that the adherents of this doctrine, who have chosen to display their ingenuity in assigning final causes to things, have employed in support of their doctrine a new form of argument, namely, a reduction, not *ad impossibile*, but *ad ignorantiam*;

<sup>1</sup> It is unnecessary here to discuss these references and those that follow. Spinoza's position is sufficiently evident.

which shows that there was no other way to set about proving this doctrine. If, for example, a stone has fallen from a roof upon someone's head, and has killed him, they will prove as follows, that the stone fell for the purpose of killing the man: If it did not fall, in accordance with God's will, for this purpose, how could there have been a chance concurrence of so many circumstances (for many circumstances often do concur)? Perhaps you will answer, it happened because the wind blew and the man had an errand there. But they will insist, why did the wind blow at that time? and why did that man have an errand that way at just that time? If you answer again, the wind rose at that time, because, on the day before, while the weather was still calm, the sea had begun to be rough; and the man had had an invitation from a friend; they will again insist, since one may ask no end of questions, but why was the sea rough? and why was the man invited at that time? And so they will keep on asking the causes of causes, until you take refuge in the will of God, that asylum of ignorance. So again, when they consider the structure of the human body, they are amazed, and because they are ignorant of the causes which have produced such a work of art, they infer that it has not been fashioned mechanically, but by divine or supernatural skill, and put together in such a way that one part does not injure another. Hence it happens that he, who seeks for the true causes of miracles, and endeavors, like a scholar, to comprehend the things in nature, and not like a fool, to wonder at them, is everywhere regarded and proclaimed as a heretic and an impious man by those whom the multitude reverence as interpreters of nature and the gods. For these men know that, with the disappearance of ignorance, wonder—their only means of argument and of maintaining their authority—goes too. But this I leave, and pass on to the third point I proposed to treat here.

“After men had persuaded themselves that everything that happens, happens for their sake; they had to regard that quality in

each thing which was most useful to them as the most important, and to rate all those things which affected them the most agreeably as the most excellent. Hence, to explain the natures of things, they had to frame the notions *good*, *evil*, *order*, *confusion*, *warm*, *cold*, *beauty*, and *deformity*; and from their belief that they are free have arisen the notions of *praise* and *blame*, *sin* and *merit*. The latter I shall explain below, after discussing the nature of man; the former I will briefly explain here. They have called *good*, everything that conduces to health and to the worship of God, and *bad* everything that is unfavorable to these. And as those who do not understand nature make no affirmations about things, but only imagine things, and take imagination for understanding; in their ignorance of things and of their nature they firmly believe that there is *order* in things. For when things are so arranged that, when they are represented to us through the senses, we can easily imagine them, and hence can easily think them over, we call them *orderly*; if the opposite be true, we say they are in *disorder*, or are *confused*. And since those things we can easily imagine are more pleasing to us than the others, men place *order* above *confusion*—as though *order* had any existence in nature except in relation to our imagination—and they say that God created all things in *order*, thus unwittingly ascribing imagination to God; unless possibly they mean that God, making provision for the human imagination, arranged all things in the way in which they could be most easily imagined. Nor will it, perhaps, put any check upon them that we find an infinity of things that far transcend our imagination, and very many that, by reason of its weakness, confound it. But of this enough. The other notions, too, are nothing but modes of imagining, which affect the imagination in various ways: yet they are regarded by the ignorant as the chief attributes of things. This is, as we have just said, because men believe that everything was made for their sake, and call the nature of a thing *good* or *bad*, *sound* or *rotten* and *spoiled*, according as it affects

them. For example, if the motion communicated to the nerves by objects represented through the eyes is conducive to health, the objects which cause it are called *beautiful*; those objects, on the other hand, that excite a contrary motion are called *ugly*. Again, those that move the sense through the nostrils are called fragrant or stinking; those that move it through the tongue, sweet or bitter, savory or unsavory, and so on; those that move it through the touch, hard or soft, rough or smooth, and so forth. Finally, those that move the ears are said to give forth noise, sound, or harmony; which last has driven men so mad that they believed even God takes delight in harmony. Nor are there wanting philosophers who have persuaded themselves that the motions of the heavenly bodies compose a harmony. All this sufficiently proves that everyone has judged of things according to the condition of his brain, or, rather, has taken the affections of his imagination for things. Hence (to make a passing allusion to this point, too), it is not surprising that so many controversies have arisen among men as we find to be the case, and that from these scepticism has resulted. For although men's bodies are in many respects alike, yet they have very many points of difference, and, therefore, what seems good to one seems bad to another; what seems orderly to one seems confused to another; what is pleasant to one is unpleasant to another; and so of the other cases, which I here pass over, not only because this is not the place to deal with them expressly, but also because it is a matter of common experience. The sayings: 'Many men, many minds;' 'Every man is satisfied with his own opinion;' 'Brains differ as much as palates;—these are in everybody's mouth; and they sufficiently prove that men judge of things according to the condition of their brains, and rather imagine things than comprehend them. For had they comprehended things all these proofs would, as mathematics bears witness, if not attract, at least convince them.

"We see, therefore, that all the fundamental notions upon

which the ordinary man is wont to base his explanation of nature, are only modes of imagining, and do not indicate the nature of anything, but only that of the imagination. Since they have names, like entities existing outside of the imagination, I call them entities, not of reason, but of the imagination. Hence all arguments against me drawn from such notions can easily be refuted. Many are accustomed to reason as follows: If everything has followed from the necessity of God's most perfect nature, whence so many imperfections in nature—the stinking rottenness of things, their disgusting ugliness, confusion, evil, sin, and so forth? But, as I have just said, those who reason thus are easily confuted; for the perfection of things is to be determined solely from their nature and power, nor are things more or less perfect because they please or displease man's senses, and are helpful or harmful to man's nature. To those, however, who ask: Why did not God create all men such as to be led solely by the guidance of reason? I answer only, because he had no lack of material wherewith to create all things from the very highest to the very lowest degree of perfection; or, to speak more strictly, because the laws of his nature were ample enough to suffice for the production of everything that can be conceived by an infinite intellect, as I have proved in Proposition 16. These are the prejudices which I undertook to note here. If any more of this sort remain, anyone can, by a little reflection, correct them for himself."<sup>1</sup>

It is easy to see from this acute criticism of the current teleology that Spinoza has wandered far from the commonly accepted notions of God and of his relation to the world, though it is also evident that he has not broken with theological modes of expression. In his mouth, such phrases as "God's most perfect nature" and "an infinite intellect" are misleading: they should be understood in a strictly Spinozistic sense, and not freighted with a meaning which does not belong to them. Properly under-

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, I, App.

stood, Spinoza's view of nature is an uncompromising naturalism. He does not merely deny the current teleology, homocentric and restricted as it is in its outlook ; he denies every interpretation of nature in any way akin to it. God or Nature becomes nothing more than nature ; and it is only a traditional use of language and the associations that have been inherited with it that cast over nature the veil through which it is seen as a fitting object to arouse religious emotion. Could all these be stripped away, it would, I think, be recognized that he has stepped quite outside of the circle of religious thinkers in the extract which I have given, and has become an out and out Democritean. '

But it may be objected that it would be doing Spinoza a certain violence to strip these things away. Have we not seen that he does not always identify God and nature ; but rather that the thought of God most in harmony with Spinozism is the thought of him as an abstract-concrete universal, a thought that stands in such an intimate relation to the mystical theology of an earlier time that it can only with difficulty be detached from this background? To this I answer : In judging Spinoza the man, it would undoubtedly be unjust to detach his conception of God from a background from which he never completely detached it himself ; but in judging of his doctrine, in asking whether his conception of God is, in itself, a religious one, we are not only justified in making a distinction between the actual content of the conception and the associations which may cluster around it, but we are bound to make such a distinction. We are concerned in this case, not with what the man inconsistently believed and felt, but with what he would have believed and felt had he been gifted with clearer vision. All this I have said in other words a little above, but this is one of those things it is worth while to say more than once. In so far, therefore, as the objector wishes to insist that one should not take too seriously Spinoza's identification of God and nature, but should rather lay stress upon Spinoza's realism, we cannot take exception to his position ; but

in so far as he wishes to intimate that Spinozism is fundamentally religious because realists have been religious men in the past, we may well refuse to follow him. Whether the conception of God as an abstract-concrete Universal is a religious conception, cannot be determined in this loose and uncritical way. To this conception I shall now turn.

It need hardly be pointed out that a man who clearly recognizes a universal to be nothing more than an abstraction will not be likely to contemplate it with sentiments of religious veneration. But one who makes universals something more, may hold them in higher respect. Whether this respect is a mere matter of association, or is justified by the nature attributed to them, is a question to be settled in each case by an examination of the actual content of the conception. Now Spinoza's "fixed and eternal things" are not mere abstractions; they are causes to which things may be referred; and the highest essence is the supreme cause from which all things have their being. Is it reasonable to call this God, and to harbor toward it those sentiments usually aroused in religious persons when that word is pronounced?

It is impossible to doubt that to Spinoza, at least, it served the purpose of a God. The whole motive of his philosophy was a religious one, as those moving pages at the opening of the treatise "De Intellectus Emendatione" clearly reveal. Experience has taught him that this transitory life is vain and unsatisfying. He is impelled to inquire whether there be not some true and changeless good to which the mind, rejecting all else, may turn, and taste of a changeless and eternal joy. Those things chiefly desired by the many—wealth, honors, sensual delights—hold out promises which they cannot fulfill, and he who is deluded by them soon finds that his joy is turned to mourning. Our happiness and misery are bound up with the character of the objects upon which we set our affections, and only distress and agitation of mind can arise from a love to

things fleeting and perishable. But a love toward a thing eternal and infinite feeds the mind with a joy pure and unalloyed. This joy is a thing so desirable that one should strain every nerve to attain it.

Accordingly, Spinoza sets himself to the task of seeking this true good. He finds it in the 'Source of Nature' of the "De Intellectus Emendatione" and the God or Substance of the "Ethics." He regards it as capable of inspiring a changeless and eternal love that is wholly satisfying: "From this we clearly comprehend in what our salvation, or blessedness, or freedom consists; to wit, in an unchangeable and eternal love toward God, that is in the love of God toward men. This love or blessedness is in the Sacred Scriptures called glory, and not without justice. For whether this love be referred to God, or to the mind, it may justly be called a satisfaction of the mind, which, in truth, is not distinguishable from glory."<sup>1</sup>

The religious spirit of the passages which set forth the nature of the "intellectual love of God" must impress every reader of the "Ethics." And yet, when we subject them to an analysis, and when we further inquire just what is included in the conception of God or Substance, this religious spirit is seen to be a matter of words and associations, and the language in which it betrays itself highly misleading. The problem of life is the attainment of adequate ideas, *i. e.*, the deduction of individuals from the highest universal under which they fall. God is that universal; not a pure abstraction, but a universal hypostatized into a cause of things. But in hypostatizing his universals, Spinoza did not really enrich their content, for we cannot call it an enrichment of the idea of God to state vaguely from time to time that all things are contained in him. The hypostatized universal, whatever inconsistent external relations be ascribed to it, remains in content just what it was before. It is much more in harmony with the reasonings of the "Ethics" to say that God

<sup>1</sup> Ethics V, 36, schol.

is contained in all things, than to say that all things are contained in God. Thus, when Spinoza maintains that "the knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God, which is involved in every idea, is adequate and perfect,"<sup>1</sup> he means by the word "*involved*" nothing more nor less than "*contained*." And in this he is reasoning consistently, for since God is the attribute<sup>2</sup> of which every idea is a mode, the knowledge of any idea—that is, of a concrete complex thing—includes the knowledge of God, an element in that thing. It is the same reasoning that leads, in Part V, to the assertion that "there is no modification of the body of which we cannot form a clear and distinct conception," or, in other words, refer to God: it is regarded as proved by the consideration that "that which is common to all things can only be conceived adequately."<sup>3</sup> God remains, then, the element common to individual things. Everywhere, except in the few passages in which Spinoza, abandoning temporarily the conception of God proper to his system and demanded by his own reasonings, makes individual things identical with God—everywhere, except in such passages, does the content of the idea of God remain meagre in the extreme. The attributes thought and extension exhaust that content. The universal has not really grown richer by being made to behave like a concrete thing, by being turned into a cause. It retains its poverty of content throughout.

And when we ask what is really meant by the intellectual love of God of which we read in the "Ethics," we find that it is nothing more than the pleasure arising from the intellectual activity implied in the deduction of individual things from the attribute of which they are modes. He who adequately knows a corporal thing or an idea, *i. e.*, he who deduces the one from the attribute extension or the other from the attribute thought,

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, II, 46.

<sup>2</sup> See § 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ethics, V, 4.

necessarily loves God ; for love is pleasure accompanied by the idea of its cause, and here there is pleasure with the thought of the appropriate attribute as cause of the same. The love is eternal, because the relation of individual to universal is eternal, and the pleasure arising out of the recognition of it is equally changeless.

Surely in all this, taken baldly, stripped of the language in which it is couched and of the emotion with which it is pervaded, there is little that is religious in the ordinary sense of that word. The intellectual love of God set before us in Part V of the "Ethics" has little in common with that love discussed in the "De Intellectus Emendatione"—that love toward a thing eternal and infinite, which feeds the mind with a joy pure and unalloyed. When one reads the paragraphs which treat of this latter, when one sees the yearnings which stirred in Spinoza for an object worthy of an absorbing affection, and when one asks whether the promise of such a satisfaction is fulfilled in the attainment of an intellectual clarity that can deduce individual triangles from the attribute extension or individual ideas from the attribute thought, one must admit that there is a sorry discrepancy between what has been aimed at and what has been achieved. The religious emotion which pervades the "Ethics" evidently does not flow from the concepts and reasonings which characterize Spinozism as a system of doctrine. It is found where it is because Spinoza was a man of religious nature and theological training, who did not wholly break with the past, but liberally modified inherited concepts, while habitually using a language rich in associations and well calculated to conceal both from himself and from his readers the actual degree of divergence between his thoughts and generally accepted notions to which they seem to bear a certain superficial resemblance. The wine which he serves is new wine, but it is contained in old bottles, and even he is not aware how new it is. Had he clearly recognized just what, in his doctrine, is meant by the word God, had he been able to free

his conception of certain irrelevant associations derived from the past, I do not believe that he would have felt toward God as it is clear he did feel. Perhaps, in that case, he would not have cared to use the word God at all.

§ 27. *Spinozistic Immortality.*—In discussing, under the heading, "The Religious Element in Spinoza," the nature of the Spinozistic Immortality, I do not wish it to be supposed that it is assumed that a belief in immortality is a necessary part of every religious view of the nature of things. The Stoic found it possible to be religious without such a belief. It seems arbitrary to refuse to apply that adjective to one who found in nature a kindred mind, approved and accepted the plan and purpose he believed to be revealed there, and adjusted himself to it cheerfully in spite of the fact that it seemed no part of that plan to guarantee to him an endless continuance in existence. Yet the belief in immortality has occupied so important a place in the religious thought of the world, it has so colored men's views of life and of the system of things, that it is scarcely out of place to discuss the subject in this connection. In Spinoza's time, as in an earlier and in a later time, it was a part of the current religious belief. I wish here to examine whether what Spinoza has to tell us of the immortality of the soul appears to justify the place which the doctrine holds in his system, and to justify also the emotions with which his words seem to inspire many of his readers. We have seen that when he uses the word God he does not really mean God as that word is commonly understood.<sup>1</sup> Can the same thing be said of his doctrine of immortality?

There have been many interpretations of the propositions in which Spinoza sets forth this doctrine. Yet they are not, I think, difficult to understand when read in the light of his theory of essences and existences and the relations conceived to exist between them. All individual things are in bondage to natural

<sup>1</sup> I speak, of course, of his doctrine; not of what the word may have inconsistently meant to him outside of that.

law, passive and perishable. Man is but a link in the endless chain of finite causes and effects; he is a mere bubble on the stream of existence. He is threatened on every side, his life-companion is fear, and he moves toward certain destruction. To find a refuge from the vicissitudes that render this life a burden, is his earnest desire. This end he can attain by putting off the mortality of the things of this world, and putting on the eternity of the essence. Thus alone can he enjoy security, and taste a changeless and eternal joy. He who has attained to this state "is little disturbed in mind, but, conscious by a certain eternal necessity of himself, of God, and of things, he never ceases to be, but is always possessed of true satisfaction of soul."

In all this there is much that one feels to be inspiring. To those who are familiar with the story of Spinoza's life, the sentences in which he describes this state of peace and joy are deeply touching. And yet we have seen that the eternity of the essence, closely scrutinized, turns out to be a something little worthy of the name of eternity, and, indeed, a something for which a man with his eyes open would hardly care to exchange even a brief existence in time. If we insist upon regarding the conception of eternity proper to Spinozism as strictly timeless—the eternity of the pure universal—we must recognize the Spinozistic immortality to be an immortality only in name; and we must condemn as wholly unjustifiable every passage in the "Ethics" which confuses a timeless eternity with a genuine temporal immortality, thus importing into Spinozism, through a mere misunderstanding, expectations and emotions which have no proper place in the system.

But it seems hardly reasonable to insist that the only conception of eternity proper to Spinozism is a strictly timeless one. I have said above that this philosophy must perforce be granted as a right a certain amount of inconsistency. A realistic view of universals cannot exist, unless universals be made at the same time abstract and concrete. And a universal that is semi-con-

crete has *ipso facto* a certain right to a semi-temporal being. Hence, when Spinoza gives his eternity an inconsistently temporal content, he appears to me to keep within the limits of inconsistency to which he may reasonably lay a claim ; and, in acting as he does, he is following good realistic precedent. We should not say, therefore, that the Spinozistic immortality does not to some extent resemble what is ordinarily understood by the word immortality ; nor should we deny to the emotions and expectations which betray themselves in Spinoza's words a right to a place in the "Ethics" merely on the ground that the immortality which he preaches is the eternity of the essence. It is the eternity of the essence in an impure and highly diluted state ; it means to Spinoza the continuance in time of the existence of the individual.

But it may be further objected that, even if we grant Spinoza an immortality not really timeless, yet the temporal immortality of the "Ethics" cannot be taken as implying a continuance of the existence of the individual in the usual and natural sense of those words ; and that, accordingly, the emotions and expectations we are discussing must still be regarded as arising out of a misapprehension. It is not the whole mind, but the reason alone, that is immortal ; the memory and imagination must perish with the body : "The mind does not express the actual existence of its body, nor conceive the modifications of the body as actual, except while the body endures ; hence it does not conceive any body as actually existing, except while its body endures. Therefore, it cannot imagine anything, or remember things past, except while the body endures."<sup>1</sup> The part of the mind which puts on immortality may be greater or less—in some cases it may be a large part—but its past must drop away from it ; it must become, as it were, impersonal.

It may well be asked whether such an immortality can justly be called the immortality of the individual ; whether a given

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, V, 21.

mind can be said to continue to exist, when what continues to exist has lost all conscious connection with what existed before. And it appears more than doubtful whether such an immortality could be an object of desire and a source of consolation to the mind oppressed with a sense of the transitory nature of this mortal life, provided that mind clearly realized just what such an immortality implies.

One is sometimes almost tempted to believe that there is in human nature a permanent tendency to give to philosophical and religious truths a place of their own, and to treat them as different from other truths—to treat them, in fact, as though they were not quite true, and were not to be taken quite seriously. Of this tendency we have a good illustration in the current doctrine, advanced quite frankly by a number of thinkers of prominence, that one is justified in repudiating any philosophy which is not satisfying to one's emotional nature, and that the desire to believe may be taken as a guarantee of the right to do so. In other fields no one thinks of seriously advocating this doctrine. I may, indeed, be induced to invest in the stocks of a given company simply because its president is the cousin of my personal friend; but unless I can deduce from this fact some sort of objective evidence bearing upon the financial standing of the company itself, a moment of cool reflection brings me to a consciousness of the fact that I am acting irrationally. I may very earnestly desire to have a railroad pay a dividend, but I must be simple indeed if I suppose that my emotional state is to be taken as an indication of what will later make its appearance upon the stage as objective reality. The Protagorean subjectivism receives such shocks in the world of verifiable fact, that it is soon set aside; indeed, it is felt to be so dangerous and misleading, that one who has had some experience of the weaknesses of human nature strives to be on his guard against the seductive promptings of his own feelings, and endeavors to lay aside all considerations which he regards as incompatible with the formation of

a strictly objective judgment. But in philosophy this is not the case. As, in politics, the complexity of the problem, so here the lack of a common foundation and of a generally accepted method, as well as the difficulty of reflective thought, make possible permanent differences of opinion, and there is no fixed day upon which the entrance of some brute fact, grossly palpable and undeniable, will bring about an involuntary harmony. Neither the philosophy of Kant nor that of Comte is expected to pay a dividend; and if either be repudiated, it will not be repudiated on compulsion. One would imagine that this consideration furnished an added reason for being on one's guard against error. One should be doubly circumspect in entering a long lane where one can expect to meet no guide posts that one may not overlook. But it is, perhaps, unreasonable to expect too much of human nature. It is clear that all men do not reason in this way. Many rather assume that their desire to follow a particular path, the satisfaction with which their feet tread its smooth and even stretches, are sufficient evidence that they are where they should be. There is nothing to prevent them from dreaming on in peace; they are not liable to any rude awakening.

It is, perhaps, worthy of note in passing, that those who take this position are not consistently Protagorean in their subjectivism, in that they attribute to the truth that they voluntarily accept as such, I will not say an objective validity, for it has not quite that, but at least a greater semblance of objective validity than they are willing to attribute to truths similarly chosen by their neighbors. Protagoras was more just, for he granted every man a right to a truth of his own. However, it seems futile to lodge a complaint of injustice against one who has laid it down as a principle that the measure of things shall be his own subjective satisfaction. Any objection, however plausible, can be quietly set aside as among the things to be classed as unsatisfactory.

But I must not be led too far afield by my illustration. It has been adduced to show that men are apt to treat matters philo-

sophical and religious in a way that would be regarded as contrary to common sense did the subject of discussion lie in another field. The same thing can be seen in the treatment that has sometimes been accorded the doctrine of immortality. Men appear to look forward with complacency to a sort of existence in a future life, which it would greatly distress them to expect to experience in the last half of the life that is. No better instance of this truth can be desired than is furnished by Spinoza himself, as I shall now try to show.

There is a passage in the Fourth Part of the "Ethics" which is well worth quoting in this connection. It reads as follows: "Here it should be remarked that I regard the body as dying, when its parts are so disposed that they come to have a different proportion of motion and rest with respect to each other. For I do not venture to deny that the human body, while retaining the circulation of the blood, and other things which cause a body to be regarded as possessed of life, may nevertheless suffer a change into another nature wholly different from its own. Nothing compels me to maintain that the body does not die unless it become a corpse; while experience itself appears to teach the opposite. For sometimes it happens that a man suffers such changes, that I could not easily declare him to be the same man; as was the case with a certain Spanish poet, of whom I have heard the following story: he was attacked by an illness, from which, indeed, he recovered, but he remained, nevertheless, so oblivious of his past life, that he did not believe the comedies and tragedies, which he had composed, to be his own; and he might really have been regarded as a grown-up infant, if he had, in addition, forgotten his mother-tongue."<sup>1</sup>

So great is the change in the man evidenced by a partial loss of memory, that Spinoza regards what has happened in the body as equivalent to the death of the body, and he is unwilling to call the man the same. And yet, in spite of this fact, he finds

<sup>1</sup> Ethics, IV, 39, schol.

satisfaction in contemplating an immortality in which the body is wholly destroyed and memory and imagination completely lost. Does the mind which attains to the Spinozistic immortality remain the same mind? Evidently Spinoza has two sets of weights and measures. He has thought of the eternity of the mind rather vaguely and loosely, after the somewhat irresponsible manner of the mystic. But when he concerns himself with this present world, he labors under no delusion. He sees that such a break in the continuity of a conscious existence as is implied in the loss of memory is the emergence of a new personality, not a continuance of the old. Such a break he regards as a misfortune. In this I think most men would agree with him.

It will perhaps be objected at this point that it is the part of selfishness to look so eagerly for a continuance of the personal life; that the chrysalis should regard its mission as accomplished in giving birth to a higher existence, whether it can be regarded as sharing in that existence, in any strict sense of those words, or must be looked upon as merely giving place to another. I hardly think it necessary to discuss here the question whether men should be as disinterested as this. I merely repeat that they do not actually reason in this way about those things that concern this present life. When they are hungry, they wish to dine themselves, and the clamors of appetite are not ordinarily stilled by reflection upon the fact that there will be a dining in which they are not personally interested. When they see death approach, they are not commonly consoled by the thought that some one else will be born. There are, undoubtedly, individuals who are capable of sinking their own personal interests in the larger life of the community. But unless men apply the same measure to this life and the next, one may well doubt the sincerity of their altruism. One may suspect that their cheerful acceptance of an impersonal immortality is due to the fact the future life is to them so vague and unreal that they never think of taking it quite seriously.

However, it is with Spinoza that I am concerned. It is very evident from his language that he did not find his consolation in such thoughts as those mentioned above. The doctrine of the "Ethics" is that the individual must strive to persevere in its being, and that it satisfies this impulse in an enlightened way by turning as large a portion of itself as possible into an eternal essence. It is everywhere suggested that the individual continues in existence, and the consequences of a destruction of the memory are not fairly faced. "The wise man," writes Spinoza, "in so far as he is considered as such, is little disturbed in mind, but, conscious by a certain eternal necessity of himself, of God, and of things, he never ceases to be, but is always possessed of true satisfaction of soul." There can be but one interpretation of such passages as this. When Spinoza wrote them he did not clearly realize the implications of his own doctrine. That doctrine denies a continuity of personal existence after death; yet the language of the "Ethics" everywhere suggests that such is implied in the eternity of the mind. It is this that gives Part V such an influence upon the emotions of its readers.

Thus we see that, even if, overlooking his statements to the contrary, we hold that the doctrine of immortality which finds its place in Spinoza's system does not teach that the eternity of the mind is really timeless, we must still maintain that it contains little to justify the feelings with which it has been regarded. Spinoza misconceived his own doctrine. The immortality which presented itself to his mind was not very different from that which presents itself to the minds of most men who use the word immortality. His emotions were adjusted to this conception, and the joy which he felt in contemplating the eternity of the mind there found its source and cause. But those elements which give worth and meaning to the conception must be stripped away, if we wish to consider, not what Spinoza, the man, thought and felt, but merely what the Spinozistic doctrine, in itself considered, can authorize one to think and feel. There

is much in the "Ethics" that belongs rather to Spinoza than to Spinozism.

§ 28. *Conclusion.*—Of course, it is possible here to object, in the spirit of the sympathetic criticism which I have already discussed, that my definition of Spinozism is too precise and too narrow. It may be insisted that Spinoza should be given credit for what he is evidently feeling after, not merely for what he has found and explicitly set forth; and that, consequently, we should include in Spinozism much more than a bald theory of existences and essences and of the journey of the soul from the one sphere of being to the other. One who holds this view may admit that Spinoza has inadequately defined God, love to God, and immortality, and yet feel justified in incorporating into his system the richer conceptions that betray themselves from time to time in his words. Is one to exclude everything save the bloodless phantoms demanded by a logical consistency? Have we not seen that God was really more to Spinoza than a mere name for the sum of things, or an hypostatized and inconsistent abstraction? And as for the Spinozistic immortality; have we not seen that the immortality to which Spinoza looked forward was *not* the timeless eternity of the essence, and did *not* imply the annihilation of the personality inseparable from the obliteration of the individual's past? Why then refuse to include all this in our notion of Spinozism?

I think the answer to this objection ought to be sufficiently evident to one who has followed me thus far. We gain little by confusing the philosophical doctrine embraced by a writer, and those things which are naturally implied in and flow from that doctrine, with other beliefs held by the same person, and which are either disconnected with or even contradictory to the doctrine in question. To treat Spinoza in the manner suggested would result in a grievous injustice to a man of genius, and would reduce a very remarkable work to a much lower place than that which it is entitled to hold. Spinoza's doctrines touching God,

the intellectual love of God, and the immortality of the mind, are not disconnected and arbitrarily embraced opinions. His reasonings form an articulated system, resting upon foundations prepared by his predecessors; and these foundations might well have appeared to a man of his time secure and unshakable. The originality of his genius is unmistakably revealed in the structure which he has reared upon them. The conception of God and the view of immortality which I have held to belong rather to Spinoza than to Spinozism form no part of this structure; they are not contained in Spinoza's premises, and they cannot be deduced from them; they are something extraneous and apart. We cannot say that, had Spinoza been gifted with clearer vision, he would have seen that his own doctrine really led to such views. On the contrary, had he been gifted with clearer vision, he would have seen that these views are incompatible with his doctrine.

It is, therefore, impossible for us to regard the views in question as a part of Spinozism, without refusing to recognize the structure and articulations of that system—without, indeed, wholly misjudging Spinoza. The “Ethics” becomes, in that case, a very ordinary book. Its reasonings lose their meaning; its modes of expression appear arbitrary; it becomes, in fact, rather a collection of loosely connected pious reflections, than an organic whole. How persons who thus read Spinoza find it possible greatly to admire him, I cannot conceive. It is quite true that Spinoza, when understood, is often perceived to reason very loosely. But his errors in reasoning are themselves not wholly unreasonable; they are what one should expect from a man in his position, resting upon realistic conceptions and adjusted to realistic modes of thought. In spite of them he has a system; he reasons and does not talk at random, and if we fail to recognize this, we reduce much of what he says to mere incoherence. For my part, I have acquired such a fondness for the man, that I do not like to see him treated as though he were

not a man, but a child ; not the author of a serious philosophical work couched in a language meant to be above all things exact and scientific, but a writer of religious rhapsodies which should not be subjected to exact criticism. Such treatment appears to me to do him small honor.

I feel inclined, therefore, to sum up my discussion of the religious element in Spinoza, by stating that there is a religious element in Spinoza, but that there is nothing religious about Spinozism as a system. What I have said above will, I hope, prevent this statement from being misunderstood.

Doubtless it will be felt by some that, notwithstanding my assertion that the word *religious* would in this discussion be used in a broad sense, its meaning has been narrowed more than it should have been. One may protest that true religious emotion may be felt toward an object which does not include even a faintly anthropomorphic element, toward an object that is not conceived at all after the analogy of the human mind. As we have seen, some men appear to have experienced such emotions in contemplation of a God, not merely veiled in clouds and darkness, but even consisting of such. And if this be possible, why may not some be moved religiously by the contemplation of abstract thought or extension, or of an immortality which is impersonal and timeless ? In which case Spinozism would have to be called religious as well as Spinoza.

To this I think I have given a sufficient answer in the first part of this discussion. It is hard to say what may not, under some circumstances, stir human emotions ; but it does not seem unreasonable to distinguish, as I have tried to do, between those things that have such an effect on account of what they are in themselves, and those things which have a similar effect on account of the associations which cluster around them. It would be rash to deny that a man may hold a religious attitude toward an Absolute which it seems almost a pleasantry to confound with a Deity ; but it seems easy to explain this attitude through well-

known tendencies in human nature. We observe that men may love gold with no conscious reflection upon those desirable things with which it has been associated and which it may be made to represent; and yet we do not regard ourselves as justified in assuming that there is something in the nature of gold that makes it in itself a fitting object to arouse and fetter human affection. Whatever may be said for the Absolute itself, the conception of the Absolute has a history, a past, and it is a matter of no small difficulty to detach this past from it. A moderate acquaintance with the history of human thought is sufficient to show, both that the shells of things remain in existence long after most of their content has evaporated, and also that emotions and capital letters have a tendency to connect themselves with such shells in an uncritical and undiscriminating way. Sometimes a philosopher goes through the motions of cleaning out and drying a shell with an apparent thoroughness that seems to leave nothing to be desired. He scours it within and without. One imagines it quite ready for its place on the shelf among other dead things of merely historical interest. But a closer scrutiny not infrequently reveals that the work has not really been thoroughly done, and that there are stirrings of life and meaning where we could not logically have expected anything of the sort. All of which amounts to saying much the same thing that I have said above, namely, that a philosopher is a man, not a logical machine, and that he has his place in a certain historical order of things.

These are the reflections which appear to me to justify my denial that Spinozism as a system is properly to be called religious. It is no part of the purpose of this paper either to approve or to condemn it on that account. I have wished merely to understand it, and to set it forth as clearly as doctrines of this nature can be set forth. I close with the hope that I have not entirely failed in my endeavor.

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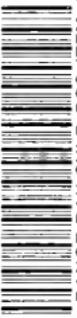


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